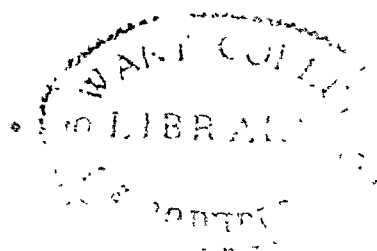


EUROPE



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# EUROPE

*A Personal and Political  
Survey*

BY

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## PREFACE

My purpose in publishing this book cannot be better explained than by quoting the answer given to my father—an Inspector of Schools—by a pupil teacher asked to explain why she had chosen that profession: “my object in becoming a pupil teacher”, she wrote, “is to instruct those more ignorant than myself, if any such I will meet.”

In my own reading I have found it extremely difficult, being constitutionally unable to remember dates with accuracy, to see my way clearly, or to distinguish the forest from the trees. Great histories of Europe, rightly and inevitably, give one so many details of so many countries that the average man—*homme moyen instruit*—suffers from a kind of historical indigestion which lessens his enjoyment and clouds his judgment.

It may well be that Lord Bolingbroke was right when he said that “all history is not an object of curiosity for any man. He who improperly, wantonly and absurdly makes it so, indulges in a sort of canine appetite”, and I shudder to think what he might have said of even a history of Europe attempted by one so ill-qualified as myself. I can only plead with Goldsmith that I write “not to add to historical knowledge but to contract it”.\*

I have called it a Political and Personal Sketch, because I am profoundly conscious of my disqualifications as an historian either of Economics or Culture, and because I have no sympathy with the writers described by Mr. Basil Williams as “regarding individuals, even the greatest, as negligible factors in the stream of historical events”, and am not ashamed to say so.

The method I have adopted has, no doubt, disadvantages of its own, but I have endeavoured to minimise them by a liberal use of cross-references and at the cost of some repetition.

I shall be more than content if a book, written primarily for my own amusement, helps a few readers to see more clearly how Europe came into its present shape, introduces them to a few forgotten heroes, and, above all, reminds them that past history is not only “present politics”, but also one of the most fascinating of studies even for the amateur.

\* I owe these two quotations (and others) to *British Historians*, by my friend Mr. Woodward, which I read too late to be deterred from my audacious attempt.



"Great is the risk", quoth the Bachelor to Don Quixote, "he runs who prints a book; it being in all probability impossible to compose one which shall content and please all who read it." I can only hope that he was also right in saying "There is no book so ill but it has in it some good."

I should like to express my gratitude to the friends who have helped me by their encouragement and their criticism, notably the Bishop of Durham, Prof. Hamilton Thompson, Prof. F. C. Hood of Durham University, Mr. Charles Lillingston of Harrow School and Mr. M. R. LeFleming of Durham School.

C. A. A.

# CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. GREECE AND ROME . . . . .	I
The Map of Europe	
The Greeks	
Rome	
Caesar	
The Roman Character	
Augustus .	
II. THE ROMAN EMPIRE TILL A.D. <u>410</u> .	16
From the Death of Nero A.D. <u>68</u> to the Reign of Marcus Aurelius A.D. 161-180	
From the Death of Marcus Aurelius A.D. 180 to the Accession of Diocletian A.D. 284	
From the Accession of Diocletian A.D. 284 to the Death of Constantine A.D. 337	
From the Death of Constantine A.D. 337 to the Taking of Rome by Alaric A.D. 410	
Europe's Debt to Rome	
European Unity (1)	
III. THE COMING OF THE BARBARIANS .	25
Vandals and Huns	
Goths and Franks	
"The Dark Ages", from the Taking of Rome A.D. 410 to the Treaty of Verdun A.D. 843	
Monasticism	
The Roman Empire at Constantinople. Justinian	
The Coming of Islam. Heraclius	
The Eighth Century. Leo the Isaurian A.D. 800-43 in the East	
IV. THE PAPACY: GROWTH OF FRANKISH POWER . . . . .	45
The Papacy 410-843	
The Growth of the Frankish Power 410-843	
Charles Martel	
Pepin	

Charlemagne (768-814)	
The Frankish Empire 814-43	
Partition of Verdun	
England to 843	
The Conversion of England	

## V. EUROPE 843-1057 . . . . . 62

European Unity (2)	
Summary	
The Roman Empire in the East	
The Bulgarian Empire	
The Conversion of the Slavs	
The Breach with Rome	
Western Europe 843-1057	
France 843-1057	
The Empire and the Papacy 843-1057	
England 843-1057	
Spain 843-1057	

## VI. EUROPE 1057-1204 . . . . . 77

Summary	
The Roman Empire in the East 1057-1204	
The Crusades	
John (1118-43) and Manuel (1143-80)	
The Fourth Crusade	
Western Europe 1057-1204. The Normans	

## VII. EUROPE 1057-1204 (*continued*) . . . . . 91

The Papacy 1057-1204	
The Papacy and the Normans	
The Empire and the Papacy 1057-1204	
The Papacy and Frederic Barbarossa	
Germany 1057-1204	
France 1057-1204	
England 1057-1204: William the Conqueror	
Spain 1057-1204	
The Effect of the Crusades	
St. Bernard of Clairvaux	

## VIII. THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY . . . . . 111

Summary	
Eastern Europe 1204-1311	
The Empire and the Papacy 1204-1305	

Innocent III (1198-1216)	
Frederic II (1194-1250)	
Frederic's descendants	
Boniface VIII (1294-1303)	
The Decline of the Mediaeval Church	
Germany 1204-1313	

## IX. THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY (*continued*) 125

France 1204-1314	
England 1204-1327	
Thirteenth-Century Religion: The Friars	
The Universities	

## X. THE END OF THE MIDDLE AGES . . . 137

European Unity (3) 1300-1800	
------------------------------	--

## XI. EUROPE 1308-1420 . . . . . 143

Summary	
The Renaissance	
The Papacy 1308-1420	
France 1308-1420	
England 1308-1420	
Economic	
Religious	
Literary	
Political	
The Great Battles of the Hundred Years War	
Germany 1308-1420	
The House of Luxemburg	
Italy	
The Rise of Switzerland	
The Eastern Empire 1308-1420	
Eastern Europe	

## XII. THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY . . . . . 162

The Eastern Empire 1420-53	
The Turks	
England 1420-1509	
France 1420-94	
Spain 1420-1516	
Germany to 1519	

XIII.	THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY ( <i>continued</i> )	179
	Italy to 1494	
	Milan	
	Venice	
	Florence	
	Naples	
	The Papacy	
	Italy 1494-1513	
XIV.	THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY	188
	The Turks in Europe	
	The Historical Background of the Reformation	
	The Reformation in Germany (to 1555)	
	The Reformation in France 1500-59	
	The Reformation in England 1509-58	
	Other English Affairs 1509-58	
XV.	THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY: THE LAST FORTY YEARS	210
	Spain to 1598	
	Germany 1556-97	
	France 1559-98	
	Italy 1550-1600	
	The Papacy	
	England 1558-1603	
XVI.	THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY: FIRST HALF	228
	Germany 1600-50	
	Wallenstein	
	France 1598-1648	
	England 1600-49	
	Charles I (1625-49)	
	Spain 1598-1650	
	North-Eastern Europe 1600-50	
	Poland and Russia to 1676	
XVII.	THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY: SECOND HALF	254
	Sweden	
	Russia	
	The Turks	
	Poland	
	Brandenburg-Prussia	

France	
Holland 1650-1700	
England 1649-1700	
Charles II (1660-85). James II (1685-88)	
William III (1688-1702)	
Europe's Debt to the Dutch	

## XVIII. THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY TO 1789 . 278

The War of the Spanish Succession 1702-14	
The War in the North 1700-20	
Russia	
Europe 1714-41	
The War of the Polish Succession 1733-38	
The War of the Austrian Succession 1740-48	

## XIX. THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY TO 1789 (continued) . . . . . 292

Russia after Peter the Great	
The French Alliance with Austria	
The Seven Years War 1756-63	
The American Revolution	
The "Benevolent Despots"	
England	

## XX. THE FRENCH REVOLUTION . 309

Predisposing Causes	
The Domestic History of France 1789-99	
The Neighbours of France 1789	
The Wars of the Revolution 1789-1802	
France between the Two Wars	
The Second War 1803-15	
Napoleon	
The Congress of Vienna	

## XXI. THE AGE OF METTERNICH 1815-48 . 333

France 1815-30	
Spain	
Portugal	
Italy	
Greece	
Germany (1) 1815-30	
Germany (2) 1830-48	
France 1848	
Italy 1848	
Austria 1848	
Germany 1848	

## XXII. THE AGE OF LOUIS NAPOLEON 1848-70 347

The Crimean War

The Union of Italy 1856-60

Germany and Austria

Germany and France 1870

Russia and Poland 1855-70

England 1815-70

XXIII. THE LAST YEARS OF THE NINETEENTH  
CENTURY . . . . . 365

France 1870-1900

England 1870-1900

Europe 1870-1900

## XXIV. CONCLUSION . . . . . 372

## GENEALOGICAL TABLES . . . . . 377

## INDEX . . . . . 382

## LIST OF MAPS AT END

Europe before History

The Athenian Empire about 450 B.C.

The Roman Empire at its Greatest Extent

The East Roman Empire

Europe at the Time of Charles the Great

Europe about 1190

France in 1429

The Partitions of Poland

## Greece and Rome

*The Map of Europe*

If you look at the map, you will at once see that the separate existence of Europe is something of an accident: there is nothing (except the Ural Mountains) to mark it off from the continent of Asia on the east; but that accident has been sufficient, and, although invading tribes have come thence in great numbers, the line of division has, throughout history, been practically the same.

In the south, the sea provides a more definite boundary, though it is one by no means impossible to cross: there are three obvious ways of approach: at the south-west end of the Black Sea, at Constantinople, which may be called the front door from Asia; at the west end of the Mediterranean, across the Strait of Gibraltar, which may be called the front door from Africa; and from Tunisia to Sicily which, though it was earlier in use than the others, may be described as an African back door.

The history of Europe has been largely concerned with the attempts made to enter by these several ways, but on the whole Europe has maintained its separate existence.

The map of Europe—the origin of the name is quite uncertain—shows us three peninsulas reaching towards the south: Spain, Italy and Greece. These three peninsulas are guarded by three strong ranges of mountains, the Pyrenees, the Alps and the Balkans, and it might have been thought that their history would have been separate from that of the rest of the continent. As we shall see, that has, from very early days, been quite untrue, and much of European history has been made up of attempts, successful or unsuccessful, to pass these mountain barriers.

Of the great rivers of Europe, two have played a decisive part—the Rhine and the Danube: they rise very close together, and may be said to divide Europe in two, from the mouth of one in Holland to the mouth of the other in the Black Sea. As we shall see, this line of division has played an important part in history—no other rivers have had anything like so great an influence and no other mountain ranges have had an importance more than local.

Of the islands of Europe, the British Isles are the only ones



whose existence has been vital to European history, though Sicily has at times been of considerable importance.

So much for the stage: we have now to look at the actors at the time when European history begins.

### *The Greeks*

For practical purposes our story begins with the Greeks.\* (The name Graecia was given to the country by the Romans: the native name is Hellas, and their king to-day is called King of the Hellenes.) The country is divided into two parts, a narrow isthmus (that of Corinth) uniting the two. Once more, for practical purposes, we can fix our attention on Attica, the promontory at the south-east end of the northern part, for that was the home of the Athenians, and it is their literature, their art and their politics which we usually mean when we speak of "our debt to Greece". What that debt is we will consider later.

The Ionian Greeks (to which branch the Athenians belonged) were great travellers, so that it was natural that they should be the first to come into contact with the outside world and so make a beginning of European history, for, of course, history in Asia and in Egypt goes back many thousand years earlier. (The story of the siege of Troy, told by Homer, is the earliest account of any such conflict; if, as is probable, it has some historical background, it more probably arose from some prosaic dispute about commerce than for the romantic reason, the elopement of Helen, which Homer gives.)

These Ionians were great seafarers, and, crossing the Aegean Sea, had made settlements on the coast of Asia Minor. (It is interesting to notice that our word "Archipelago", meaning a sea full of islands, is an inheritance from the Greeks, for the word means "chief sea", and it happened that the Aegean, the chief sea which they knew, has many islands, large and small.)

These settlements were conquered early in the sixth century by Croesus, King of Lydia (a king so rich that his name has become proverbial), but he treated them well. When he in turn was conquered by Cyrus, King of Persia, in 546 B.C., they revolted; the Athenians sent some ships to help them, and burnt Sardis, the capital of Lydia. "These ships", says Herodotus, "were the beginning of troubles": they were the cause of the Persian wars.

\* The earliest European civilisation is called Minoan, and has left its chief traces at Knossos in Crete.

Though the revolt was soon suppressed, the Persian kings could not forget the insolence of the Athenians, and sent three expeditions to conquer Athens. The first, in 492 B.C., was a complete failure, largely because the fleet and transports were destroyed by a storm off Mount Athos, in Thrace; the second, two years later, sailed straight across the Aegean and landed at Marathon, twenty-two miles from Athens. Here their army was completely routed by the Athenians (who lost only 192 men) in what has been called one of the decisive battles of the world. It looks as if the Persians were as inferior in fighting power as the great Indian armies which the British were afterwards to defeat in India.

The following passage, from Sir George Trevelyan's sketch of *An Ancient Greek War*, helps us to realise the scene:

"In the year 490 B.C. an innumerable host of Persians landed on Athenian soil—Persians who had found nothing that could resist the terror of their name from the Indus to the Aegean Sea. The crisis was awful. The states of Greece stood aloof in fear and amazement. Sparta, by an unworthy subterfuge, excused herself from coming to the aid of Athens. But the threatened city was true to herself. Her able-bodied sons turned out to a man, and marched quietly forth to make appeal to the God of battles. Shopkeepers and mechanics, artists, merchants, and farmers, they took down their spears and shields, pocketed their biscuit and salt fish, kissed their children, and walked through their doors without any notion that they were going to take part in an affair which all coming generations would remember with gratitude and admiration. And, when they came to the sacred Plain of Marathon, they did not stop to count the odds; but went at a run straight into the midst of the 20 myriads of Medes and Phoenicians. Out of breath, but not of heart,—with such line as they could keep, and with so much martial science as a city militia might recall in the heat of contest—they fought foot to foot and beard to beard, until the conquerors of the world broke and fled. And that very night they marched home to their supper:—all save one hundred and ninety-two, who were lying, with clenched teeth, and knit brows, and wounds all in front, on the threshold of their dear country, where it becomes brave men to lie."

In 480 B.C. Xerxes, the new king, made a third attempt. He had dug a canal through Mount Athos, to avoid the storms, and got safely to the north of Greece. The Spartans (who did not love the Athenians—they were the great power in the Peloponnese or

southern part of Greece) had for once come to their help, and held the pass of Thermopylae: when this was turned by a mountain track, their King, Leonidas, and three hundred of his men all died at their post. They had a famous epitaph:

Go, tell the Spartans, thou that passest by,  
That here, obedient to their laws, we lie.

The Persians pressed on, their fleet keeping pace with them along the coast: they took Athens, most of the people retreating to the little island of Salamis close by. In the Bay of Salamis, largely through the skill of the Athenian Themistocles, their fleet was forced to fight and was completely defeated by the Athenian Navy. Xerxes (who had had a throne set up to watch the victory of his ships) went home himself, leaving a very large army to conquer the rest of the country; but this was completely defeated next year (479 B.C.) at Plataea, and the danger from Persia was over.

This is the point at which to consider what we should have lost if the Athenians had been beaten. In the years which followed Athens produced architecture and sculpture which is still the wonder of the world; in literature she produced the earliest history written in Europe, some of the loveliest lyrics and the greatest dramas, both tragic and comic: her philosophers are still the most famous in the world, and she made a beginning of European science.\* She developed the principles of democracy (though it must never be forgotten that she was a slave-owning city) and no one who studies politics can afford to neglect what Greek writers have to tell us. That all this should have been done in a single small city (her population, not counting slaves, cannot have been more than about twenty-five thousand adult males) in the course of less than two hundred years is the most amazing thing in human history, and all this, so far as we can see, would have been lost to us if the Persian invasion had succeeded. The contest between Athens and Persia was a struggle between the home of the free spirit of man and oriental despotism, and, as such, vital to Europe.

The Greeks, by which we mean the Athenians, were extremely quick-witted: they put this down to their climate, contrasting its clearness with the "muddy air" under which their neighbours, the Boeotians, lived. They were very inquisitive, always anxious to ask questions: it will be remembered that in St. Paul's time

\* Most of our scientific terms are derived from the Greek.

"they spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing"; this is the quality which made them the first men of science. The average Athenian, it has been truly said, was far better educated than the average member of Parliament: this was made possible by the institution of slavery, for manual labour and all trade were regarded as beneath the dignity of freemen. It should be added that, except in the silver mines, the lot of an Athenian slave was not usually hard, and that he could hope to regain his freedom.

It was this high standard of education which made it possible for them to work so extremely democratic a constitution: they could elect their judges and their governors by lot, because one man was really, roughly speaking, as good as his neighbour; but it cannot be said that in times of crisis the system always worked well.\* They attached too much value to mere ability to speak, and were liable to become victims of a clever demagogue. And so we find the political thinkers of Athens rather too ready to admire the governments of states like Sparta, where a somewhat Fascist discipline was in force.

But, with all their defects, the Athenians in their great days were the most remarkable people who have ever come from one city, and our debt to them for much of the greatest art and the greatest literature of the world is quite incalculable.†

This was an exciting beginning for European history: it was by no means the last time that Europe was threatened with danger from outside, but it was perhaps the most serious threat.

The rest of the story of Greece can be briefly told. It is rather a sad one. Athens became much the strongest state in Greece, largely through her fleet, and was certainly selfish in her use of power; it was the tribute of her subjects which made it possible for her to raise her splendid buildings. Other Greek states, and notably Sparta, were naturally jealous, and the result was what is called the Peloponnesian War, which lasted from 431-404 B.C.

\* The Americans, as Bryce remarks, have at times been tempted by their natural optimism to act on the same principle in selecting their rulers.

† In view of these facts, it is a disgrace to our intelligence that we should have allowed the knowledge of the Greek language to become the privilege of the few. The scientists may be more readily forgiven, for their debt to Greece, though very real, is comparatively remote. But that those concerned with literature, history, philosophy or politics should not have demanded that Greek should be taught, or at least offered, to any boy or girl capable of learning it is a scandalous example of incompetence and ingratitude. For "there never has been, there never will be, a language like the 'dead Greek' which had all the merits of other tongues without their accompanying defects", Maurice Baring, *Have you anything to declare?* p. 15.

It ended in the fall of Athens—largely because she wasted her strength in an expedition to Sicily, to which (and to South Italy) Greek colonies had spread.

Sparta, and later Thebes, became the strongest state in Greece. They quarrelled bitterly with one another, for the Greek cities—those “peppery little states”, as they have been called—could never agree to federate and seldom to live at peace. (It is characteristic of them that they used to declare peace instead of declaring war.) The result was that power passed to Macedonia in the north, a state only partially Greek, though its first great King, Philip, had been trained at Thebes. He established his supremacy at the battle of Chaeronea (338 B.C.) where Athens, roused by the great orator Demosthenes, fought for independence.

Philip died two years later, leaving a great son, Alexander, who, in thirteen years, carried his power into Asia, rescued Egypt from the Persians, and led his armies as far as India before he died at the age of thirty-two (323 B.C.). It was a marvellous career, but does not directly belong to the history of Europe. (Candahar in Afghanistan and Alexandria in Egypt both preserve his name.)

Nevertheless, Alexander is one of the men whose indirect influence upon Europe has been immense, for the Greek tradition which he carried with him coloured the life and thought of Syria and Egypt, which in turn affected Western thought. But for him, it is very doubtful whether we should have had to speak of the Greco-Roman Empire of the Easterns, and whether Greek would have been one of the languages used in the inscription on the Cross of Him who

“Wandering unarm’d save by the Spirit’s flame,  
In few years with few friends founded a world-empire  
Wider than Alexander’s and more enduring”.

The diffusion of Greek thought and Greek language was very largely the result of his campaigns, and is their most enduring monument.

After Alexander’s death his empire broke up, the most important fragments being the kingdoms of Egypt, Syria and Macedonia, the last, of course, including Greece. This fell before Rome, and 155 years after Alexander’s death the last king of Macedonia was led a captive behind the triumphal car of the Roman general (168 B.C.). The Greeks tried to resist, but their independence was finally lost in 146 B.C., not to be recovered for some 2,000 years.

It was not till A.D. 1832 that Greece again became free to

manage her own affairs, and not till 1941 that, under General Metaxas, she finally proved that she was fully worthy of a place among the states of Europe. (We shall hear of her in the years between, but only as the more or less obedient subject of various alien powers.)

### *Rome*

It is now time to turn to the second people of the ancient world who have left a mark on European history; and the first who gave it a unity. The Romans dated their history from the year 756 B.C. At some uncertain date they left the volcanic hills on which they had first settled, perhaps because they still *were* volcanic, and moved a few miles northward to the city afterwards called Rome, on the Tiber. It was a good site, with a steep hill, the Palatine, rising above the river, and an island which made the river easy to bridge (with the wooden bridge which the famous Horatius was to defend). There the tribe settled, and to that hill they brought their flocks in time of danger: the name of the Porta Mugonia shows that their cows spoke the language of to-day; and there they built the first arch to their main drain, the Cloaca Maxima—for the Greeks, with all their architectural skill, had never invented arches.

In course of time they took in seven hills, of which only four are really separate, the other three being spurs of the high ground outside. They expelled their kings and established two chief rulers elected every year—the consuls—a Senate, not unlike our House of Lords at its best, and an assembly which gradually became more and more democratic. An interesting office was that of the “Tribuncs of the people”, men charged specially with the duty of protecting the “plebeians” or poorer citizens, who gradually became very powerful.

The power of Rome itself rapidly grew; they conquered their neighbours, of whom the most important were the Samnites to the east and the Etruscans to the north; they subdued the Greek settlements in the south (see p. 6),\* and by the year 220 B.C. they had pushed back the Gauls who lived south of the Alps (Gallia Cisalpina), and held the whole of the peninsula.

But before this Rome had had to face the second of the great

\* Pyrrhus, King of Epirus in Greece, came to help the Italian Greeks in 280 B.C., and his elephants and his Macedonian phalanx gave the Romans much trouble for five years.

invasions of Europe from outside—this time from Africa. As her power began to grow, she began to found a navy (though the Romans were never very successful in seamanship); this roused the jealousy of Carthage, the great sea power in what we call Tunisia, which, like Rome, had grown out of a city into a state, and a state far richer than her rival.

The result was a series of three wars which lasted from 264 to 146 B.C. with considerable intervals. In the first, fought mainly at sea, which ended in 241 B.C., the Romans were victorious largely because of their unconventional tactics, and secured the island of Sicily. In the second (218–201 B.C.) Carthage produced a very great general, Hannibal, who invaded Italy from Spain, where the Carthaginians were strong, crossed the Pyrenees and the Alps, and beat the Romans four times, ending with a crowning victory at Cannae. But the Romans did not lose heart, and Hannibal, who was not well supported by his home government, had to leave Italy, and was finally beaten at Zama. The last war in 149 B.C. was simply a war of extermination, undertaken because Carthage, in spite of all its losses, was still a flourishing city: it was utterly destroyed and its site ploughed up.

We know too little of Carthage to be able to say what the effect on Europe of a Carthaginian victory might have been. They were, no doubt, better as traders than as rulers, and the undoubted greatness of Hannibal probably makes us inclined to take too favourable a view of them. The culture of Rome and that of Carthage could not have co-existed, and it was a true though cruel instinct which prompted the Roman cry *Delenda est Carthago*. But in any case Carthage was not a menace to the civilisation of Europe in the sense that Persia had been: it was the first, but by no means the last, time when this "African back door" into Europe was to be used.

These wars meant that Rome by degrees acquired almost the whole of Spain, and during its course she had not only conquered Macedonia, as already described (see p. 6), but had also crossed the Aegean, defeated the King of Syria and acquired much of Asia Minor. Before the end of the century she had also established her first province beyond the Alps (a fact recalled by the name Provence), in 122 B.C. By 64 B.C. she held Italy, Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica, a good deal of Africa to the east of Carthage (what we call Tripolitania), all Spain except the north-west coast, the south of France, a small piece round the head of the Adriatic, Mace-

donia, Greece, Crete, a deep strip along the north-west and south of Asia Minor, and the kingdom of Syria reaching to the Euphrates on the east and Mount Hermon to the south.

It is time to stop this rather tedious catalogue of growth, and to turn to her government, which was soon to undergo a startling change.

As the Roman possessions grew, it became clear that its government was not well fitted for its work: it had been created to deal with a comparatively small body of people, all of the same race and all living near one another; it now had to administer the affairs of many different races living all round the Mediterranean. The Senate, filled up largely by retired officials with some experience of government, was on the whole a good body, but the system of two equal Consuls was awkward, or might easily become so, and the arrangement of the popular assembly was clearly absurd. As representative government had not been invented, "the people of Rome" meant the free citizens actually *in* Rome, and no one could maintain that they deserved to have the power to speak in the name of the whole body. It was almost as silly as if the people of London were to be given the right to speak for the British Empire. As their importance grew, it became possible for ambitious men to bribe or bully a Roman crowd, which found itself unexpectedly so powerful. The first men who succeeded in winning real personal power were two brothers, the Gracchi, who used their power as tribunes to try to get a fairer distribution of the land owned by the State: they were both murdered (in 133 and 121 B.C.). Their objects were good, but they showed the way to others whose aims were purely selfish.

Again, now that Rome was winning great victories, it was natural that a successful soldier should become the national hero—as has happened, for instance, in the United States—and he might easily be an ambitious man, to whichever political party he might belong. In Mommsen's phrase, the sword appeared beside the crown on the political horizon. In the last century B.C. two such soldiers arose—Marius, a man of the people, who had made his name by conquering the Cimbri and Teutones (the first time we hear this German name) who had ravaged Gaul and invaded Italy; the other an aristocrat, Sulla, who had triumphed over Mithradates, King of Pontus in Asia Minor. Both Marius and Sulla had to deal with a rising of the Italians who demanded to be made full citizens of Rome, and carried on what was called a



"social war" for two years (90-89 B.C.). In these wars Marius lost credit and Sulla gained it. The Romans wisely decided first to give full citizenship to all who had not revolted, and then to all who laid down their arms in two months. This was a step in the right direction, but did not solve the question of how they were to vote in the Assembly at Rome.

Both generals in turn became practically dictators, and both suppressed their opponents with great cruelty, but Sulla was much the abler and the more successful, and he really ruled Rome with absolute power for three years.

After his retirement (79 B.C.) things nominally settled down as before. Conservatives (like Cicero) hoped that the authority of the Senate would be restored, especially if it could come to terms with the moneyed class (called the Equites or Knights), but the way had been shown for an ambitious man to seize power, and it was not long before the man came.

### *Caesar*

In 60 B.C. three men—Caesar, Pompeius and Crassus—formed themselves into what was called a Triumvirate, to help each other to attain the highest positions. Crassus was the least important; he was a rich man and wanted to be richer. (It is said that much of his wealth came from the fact that he had the only fire brigade in Rome: when a property caught fire, as often happened, he bought it very cheap, extinguished the fire, and made a huge profit.) He also wished to be Consul, and thought he might prove himself a general, but this ended in his death in battle in Mesopotamia after a terrible defeat in 53 B.C. by the Parthians.

Pompeius was a good general, though with the mentality of a drill sergeant, and not by nature an ambitious man; he would have supported the Senate if they had given him the chance, but they were suspicious of him, and so threw him, for a time, into the arms of Caesar.\*

Caesar was undeniably ambitious: he was an aristocrat with sympathy with the people. His early career had been rather a failure, and in the year 60 B.C., when he was forty years old, he had nothing as yet to show and had had no military experience; but he was conscious of his genius and only wished for an oppor-

\* Cicero, a good Conservative, who tried to support the authority of the Senate, and to induce it to co-operate with the Equites, was ruined by the stupidity of his allies. He is absurdly called by Mommsen "that notorious political trimmer".

tunity to show it. After being Consul, with Crassus, in 59 B.C., he obtained the government of Gaul for five years; this was extended for a further five years in 56 B.C. He stayed there for nine years altogether, conquered the country, made an expedition to Britain (though he did not conquer it) and carried the Roman frontiers up to the Rhine. It was a wonderful achievement, of which he has left us a full account.

Meanwhile Pompeius and Crassus, after being Consuls together in 55 B.C., had gone off to their respective provinces of Spain and Syria. Crassus died, as we have seen, but Pompeius was soon back in Rome wondering, as everyone was wondering, what Caesar would do when he came home at last. He and the Senate were naturally afraid that if he came back with his devoted army behind him he would seize supreme power, so they insisted that he must resign his command before the full term was up, and refused to let him stand for the consulship until he became a private citizen again.

Caesar knew that, if he agreed, his life would be unsafe, so he brought his army with him into Italy, "crossing the Rubicon", the border stream which no general might pass at the head of an army. This meant open war.

For the next five years, 49-44 B.C., Caesar was continually occupied in fighting, with only occasional visits to Rome. In 49 B.C. he attacked Spain and beat the Pompeians there; in 48 he crossed into Thessaly and defeated Pompeius at Pharsalia; in 47 he moved into Asia and won the battle of Zela (his bulletin, *Veni, Vidi, Vici*, is famous); in 46 he destroyed the Pompeians in Africa; in 45 he pursued the remains of the party into Spain and beat them once more; in 44 he was murdered by conspirators, led by his friend Brutus, who were afraid that he meant to make himself king in fact as well as in name. (He had recently begun calling himself Imperator and wearing robes all of purple, whereas a consul's robe had only a purple border.)

It is an amazing career. When a man first becomes a serious politician at thirty-nine years old, makes himself into a great general in his forties, and shows himself also a great statesman in his fifties, it is hard to put any limit to his possibilities, and it is not surprising that some historians, both English and German, have been tempted to regard him as almost divine. The fact that great rulers such as Kaisers, Tsars and Shahs, have been proud to bear the name of a simple Roman family is a dramatic

evidence of the impression which Caesar made upon the world.\*

But Caesar died when he had only had a few months in all in Rome to show what his plans might have been. So far as we can see, they were wise and far-seeing—such as his extension of the citizenship, his widening of the basis of the Senate, his grant of lands to his veterans, and his plans for a codifying of the laws and a survey of the whole empire. But his murderers cut the work short, and the Roman Empire as we know it is not his creation, though it was his life which made it possible. Thirteen years were to pass before it came into being.

The story of these thirteen years need not occupy us long. Caesar's nearest heir was his great-nephew, Octavianus, a young man of nineteen, of whom nothing was known. He, after a year, entered into an alliance with Marcus Antonius, Caesar's lieutenant, to defeat the party of Caesar's murderers, headed by Brutus, and defeated them at Philippi (42 B.C.). They then divided power between them, but, though Antonius married Octavianus' sister, it was clear that they would soon come to blows. Antonius, who had taken the control of the Eastern provinces, left Italy, and lived in Egypt with Cleopatra, queen of the country, to whom he ceded some Roman provinces. Octavianus declared war, and defeated them both at Actium (31 B.C.); they both committed suicide in Egypt, which country was now annexed to Rome.

Rome had now acquired the command of all the countries round the Mediterranean, and of the mainland of Europe as far of the Rhine and the Danube; the Empire had come into existence, and the emperor was ready in the person of Octavianus, soon to be called Augustus; European history, as a whole, had begun.

### *The Roman Character*

Before we begin the history of the Roman Empire it will be right to consider the character of the Roman people, which has left so deep a mark upon Europe. It is clear, from what we have seen, that they were first-rate soldiers, with a real feeling for discipline; they were also, in their best days, first-rate governors with a strong sense of justice: that is why Roman law is perhaps

\* It is amusing to remember that it might easily have been some other family name, like Cato or Cicero or Brutus, and to guess what titles might have been derived from them.

their most permanent gift to the world. They were great builders, as well as great road makers, and their buildings and their roads still exist to do them honour in every country which they possessed; their invention of the arch was their chief contribution to architecture.

If we compare them with the Greeks we cannot doubt that they had far less artistic genius; but they were wise enough to learn from them, and Latin literature has very great merits of its own, though it is only comparatively seldom that it shows great qualities of imagination. They had a fine patriotism (which the Greeks could only feel for a particular city) and some of their greatest and most characteristic literature, for example, the work of Virgil, is inspired by a love of Rome and of the Italian country. In oratory and in history they were not unworthy rivals of the Greeks. Their virtues, in their best days, were the simple domestic virtues of honesty, purity and simplicity, for they had a very strong feeling for family life, and a "Roman matron" had a position which no Greek wife could hope to secure. Their religion, perhaps through lack of imagination (in which, as in humour, they were deficient), was a prosaic affair; it is characteristic of them that in early days they invented a god of silver money, whose father was the god of copper money, and they had deities to watch over each ordinary affair of life. The gods whom they nominally worshipped were colourless beings, unlike the very vivid (and very human) gods of the Greeks: what they really worshipped was Rome (in this, and in their devotion to their ancestors, they were like the Japanese). It is not surprising that in course of time they found themselves worshipping the emperor, who was Rome personified.

Their qualities, unlike those of the Greeks, are easy to detect and to define. The Roman character is as unmistakable as the Roman nose, and the Duke of Wellington, a distinguished wearer of the one, was, in his simple and unquestioning devotion to duty, a good example of the other. The words which we associate with Rome all bear her authentic mark: the "Roman matron" was a real person; the "household gods" were really worshipped; and "Roman fortitude" rightly recalls a nation which preferred the philosophy of the Stoics. The stories which everyone knows are true to type—Regulus, the hostage, going willingly back to submit to torture; the Senate thanking a defeated general because he had not despaired of the republic; and their greatest gift to the

world—that of impartial justice—lives for ever in St. Paul's confident cry: "I appeal unto Caesar".

### *Augustus*

Octavianus, whom we know as Augustus, is the first person whose character, as distinguished from anything written or said or done, vitally affected European history. Had he not been the man he was, the Roman Empire, as we know it, could not have come into existence, with all the tremendous results which it was to have upon the history of Europe. In this respect he may be compared to George Washington, whose character alone made possible at that time the existence of the United States of America.

He was perhaps not personally very attractive. As a young man he was not guiltless of cruelty, or at any rate allowed opponents to be savagely put to death, but if he had any such tendency it is all the more to his credit that, as Emperor, he kept it completely in check. He established a government which preserved peace, justice and order; under him the frontiers were well defended, and the provinces well governed; he strengthened the influence of religion in preserving the old Roman virtues, and, being himself a lover of the country, did all he could (with Virgil's help) to encourage farming of all kinds throughout Italy. It was due to him that Italy, rather than Rome, became the centre of the patriotism of the people. He understood their conservatism, and though everyone knew that he held supreme power, he exercised it under the old constitutional forms: if his person was sacred, that was because he permanently held the office of tribune; if he tried to reform public morals, it was because he held the old office of censor. He treated the Senate with respect, and gave it control of all the provinces except those in which armies were stationed. It is difficult to think of any ruler who made so few mistakes, or who accomplished so much for his people and for the world.\*

He had one great advantage, in the length of his tenure of power: he became master of the European world at thirty-four years of age, and held his power for forty-three years, till his death in A.D. 14. But there was one serious disadvantage, and that was the absence of an heir: it is very remarkable, and was very unfor-

\* His greatness is rightly recorded by the number of towns which recall the name which he made famous, for instance, in four different countries, Augsburg, Autun, Aosta and Saragossa.

fortunate, that his family was so unproductive. The Julian family remained in possession for fifty-four years after his death, but the Empire never descended from father to son: Augustus appointed his stepson Tiberius, with the death of whose great-nephew Nero in A.D. 68 the Julian house came to an end.

All its members in different ways showed the dangers of absolute power. Tiberius, in spite of many crimes, was at least an able man, but his three successors were all in various ways inadequate—Caligula, frankly mad (he made his horse a consul and claimed to be addressed as god); Claudius, whose pedantry concealed his real ability; and Nero, an artistic and bloodthirsty madman. It is tempting to meditate on what might have happened had Augustus had an heir like-minded with himself to consolidate the work which he had so splendidly begun. When the Julian house came to an end, as there was no fixed line of succession, the Empire became the prize of any ambitious man, probably an ambitious soldier, and so it was to remain till the end.

## CHAPTER II

### The Roman Empire till A.D. 410

From one point of view—and that perhaps the point of view most suitable for an historian—the Roman Empire may be said to have lasted till A.D. 1453, when the last Roman Emperor died defending Constantinople against Asia, a task which his predecessors had been performing for some 800 years. But by that time, of course, the history of Europe had long ceased to be limited to the history of the Roman Empire. From our present point of view the obvious line to be drawn is at the point when other countries begin to develop a history of their own, and that may be fixed somewhere in the fifth century.

But this still leaves us with 400 years to traverse, and it will be convenient to find some halting places. One may be found early in the reign of Marcus Aurelius (A.D. 167), when for the first time the barbarians broke through the frontier defences, a serious sign of what was soon to come; a second, when Diocletian (who reigned from A.D. 284–305), reorganised the Empire as an autocracy and removed the seat of government from Rome; a third, when Constantine (A.D. 312–337), accepting Christianity as the official religion, founded Constantinople as a Christian city; while the period may be held to end when the capture of Rome by Alaric the Goth (A.D. 410) finally dispelled the legend of Rome's invincibility. We will consider these periods separately.

#### *From the Death of Nero A.D. 68 to the Reign of Marcus Aurelius A.D. 161–180*

The failure of the Julian line at once led to anarchy, and there were no less than three emperors in one year, but the family of Vespasian, a simple but honest soldier, provided three emperors in succession and gave good government till Domitian, the third of them, again proved that "absolute power corrupts absolutely". When this family (the Flavian) ended in A.D. 96, it appeared that a satisfactory solution had been found in the principle of adoption, which provided four admirable emperors in Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius. So successful was their rule that, as is well known, Gibbon gives it as his opinion that at the end

of this period the Western world was happier than ever before or since. As will soon be seen, the happiness was to be but short-lived.

As one would expect, there are very solid grounds for Gibbon's verdict. The ordinary Roman enjoyed very real and definite advantages: his government secured him from enemies and gave him peace at home; justice was not difficult to secure; trade was prosperous: corn came in plenty from Africa, and, as the seas were secure, the goods of Asia were to be had by those who could well afford them: oysters from Britain (finally conquered in A.D. 74) were the latest luxury on the table.

Communications by land were secured by an admirable road system: it is said that Sir Robert Peel took as long to get from Rome to London when he was summoned to be Prime Minister as he would have taken in the days of the Antonines, and these same roads carried a good system of posts.

Education was widespread, and the Latin language was enriched by poets, philosophers, and story-tellers from Spain and Africa. Roman culture was to be found in Provence as truly as in Italy. Religious tolerance was general, for the Roman religion was not exclusive. Was there not a Pantheon in Rome which welcomed gods from all quarters? If you liked to dabble in Egyptian mysteries, or in those of Mithras (becoming so popular in the army) no one would say you nay. There were no doubt some exceptions; the Jews (not for the last time in history) were liable to be turned out of Rome, and there was an obscure Jewish sect, the Christians, which, for no very clear reason, was on the proscribed list. One heard occasionally that some of them had been put to death, but apparently that was rather for disloyalty to the emperor than for any other reason. This emperor-worship was no doubt rather a new thing: they took it more seriously in the East—but, after all, what did it mean except that, as the gods clearly had Rome in their special care, the emperor might fairly be regarded as their representative on earth?

No doubt a Roman citizen had a position superior to his neighbour, but any prosperous man might become a citizen, if, like the officer who arrested St. Paul, he could afford to pay for it; and his privileges were not excessive. Slavery still existed, but slaves had the chance of winning freedom, and many freed men, as everyone knew, had risen to high distinction. There were many good reasons for thinking that all was for the best in the best of all possible worlds.



There were some darker shadows on the picture. What we hear of Rome itself comes largely from satirists and satirical historians; but satire cannot flourish without some material. The days were gone when Tacitus had declared that in Rome "virtue was a sentence of death", but there is good reason to believe that the city's morals were no better than those of other great towns in other ages; and gladiatorial games did nothing to raise their tone. Moralists, as in all ages, found plenty of self-indulgence and luxury to denounce, and the decline in the birth-rate and the practice of infanticide were causing pessimists to shake their heads; but life in Rome, a city admirably built and planned, amply supplied with baths and colonnades, was a pleasant thing, and taxes were low there, as indeed throughout the Empire.

It was from the frontier that trouble was to come. Augustus, after some unpleasant experience beyond the Rhine, had bidden his successors to be content with the boundaries which he had left them, and, on the whole, they had obeyed his command. Claudius had taken in Morocco, which seemed obviously wise, and had begun the conquest of Britain (completed under Domitian) to which there could be no objection; Trajan alone had taken a doubtful step by taking in Dacia, across the Danube—an act to which the name Roumania bears witness to-day—somewhat of a hostage to fortune. On the other hand the Flavian Emperors (Vespasian's house) had wisely linked the Danube to the Rhine by a series of strong places which were strengthened by Hadrian and connected by good military roads. All might well seem secure.

But it was on the armies on the frontier that all prosperity and security depended, as truly as English prosperity rests on the navy. It was a fine army, its legions composed of Roman infantry with cavalry supplied by auxiliaries, but it was not without dangers of its own.

The legionary served for twenty years, and, as he was normally quartered in the same place for all that time, he formed strong local connections besides the loyalty which bound him to his legion as a corporation. He very likely married a native of the district and acquired some land of his own; there was clearly a danger that he would not only care more for his general than for the distant authority of Rome—this had already been seen during the anarchy after Nero's death—but that he would come to care more for the country of his adoption than for his native land.

It is a tragic irony that it was Marcus Aurelius, the best and

wisest of emperors, who not only allowed or encouraged a persecution of Christians (in whom he could see nothing but "sheer obstinacy"), but also had to witness the first definite breakdown in the defence of the frontier.

Directly after his accession a collection of barbarian tribes broke through the lines on the Danube (from which some troops had been removed for a war in the East), and in A.D. 167 they actually invaded the sacred soil of Italy, attacking Aquileia, on the mainland off which Venice now lies. They were ultimately beaten off, and the frontier preserved, but at the cost of transplanting barbarians to its Roman side. Besides its effect in exhausting the resources of the Empire, this war and its settlement were ominous of much that was to come.

*From the Death of Marcus Aurelius A.D. 180 to the Accession of Diocletian A.D. 284*

This is a period of rapid decline: the tendencies which had before been visible become in this century both clear and dangerous.

The Empire was becoming cosmopolitan, which was a reversal of the old conception that it was to be Latin both in speech and culture. Cosmopolitanism may have been necessary, but it clearly did not make for unity, or for a clear-cut patriotism. The new spirit is shown in the choice of emperors: in this period one was a Syrian, one an Arab, and a third an African.

Again, the emperors were almost all the creation of the army, or rather of particular local armies, liable to be deposed by some military rival. It is enough to say that in the seventy-three years between Septimius Severus and Diocletian there were no fewer than twenty-three emperors, and that of them only two died peaceful deaths—one of these as a prisoner of war in the Far East. Some of them were capable soldiers, but there are only two whose names need be remembered: Decius, because of a savage persecution of the Christians (which earned him from Tertullian the name of "execrable animal"), and because he lost his life in A.D. 250 in battle with the Goths, and Aurelian, both because he made peace with them by the sacrifice of Trajan's province of Dacia, and because of his great walls, which were the defence of mediaeval Rome and are one of its glories to this day. All along the banks of the Rhine and the Danube there stood, by the end of the century, a threatening array of hostile peoples.

These incessant wars, domestic and foreign, put a heavy strain on the finance of the Empire, and prosperity rapidly declined. It was becoming harder and harder to induce townfolk to undertake the laborious duties of local government, and savage legislation was needed to force the leading citizens to accept office: the army was no longer a homogeneous body. The immense prestige of Rome was rapidly sinking: her credit declined, her coinage depreciated, and the middle class was ruined as surely though not as swiftly as the middle class in Germany by the fall of the German mark in recent years.

*From the Accession of Diocletian A.D. 284 to the Death of Constantine A.D. 337*

The time was clearly ripe for drastic changes, both political and moral, and these were supplied in the next fifty years, not without some success. Diocletian, who was a Dalmatian peasant by birth, turned his back on all the elaborate constitutional pretences which Augustus had set up. He decided that the Emperor should be an avowed despot, and called himself by the title of "*dominus*". He wore a diadem and glorious robes: he made even the highest officials prostrate themselves before him: he had finished once for all with the pretence, which had become very flimsy, that the Emperor was only the "first citizen", chosen by the free voice of his people.

He may have been right or wrong: he certainly strengthened the Empire for a time; but, in any case, he is the most important figure since Augustus, and the tradition which he established was to last, at Constantinople, for more than a thousand years. Personally, he has two other claims on our interest: he instituted, or at least agreed to, the last and fiercest of the persecutions of the Christians, aiming not, like Decius, at destroying their leaders, but at destroying their sacred books.\* Again, it was at his palace at Spalato that in the peristyle an arch was for the first time set on the top of a pillar, and the way to Gothic architecture made clear.

In another way also Diocletian reduced Italy and Rome to the level of the provinces, by abolishing their privileges in taxation. He was a great "centraliser", and established uniformity of

\* It was apparently because of these persecutions that the word "traitor" acquired its evil association, for those Christians who "handed over" their Bibles were known as Traditores.

administration throughout his dominions. He restored the coinage, and, recognising that the frontier troops had really become a militia of settled farmers, relied rather on a mobile striking force which could be sent at short notice to any threatened spot. But, seeing that the Empire needed some subdivision, he established a system by which there were to be two "Augusti", each with a "Caesar" under him: their four capitals (so completely was the Roman tradition discarded) were at Milan, Treves, Sirmium (in Illyricum) and Nicomedia (in Asia Minor). This system prepared the way for the later division of the Empire into East and West, but, so long as Diocletian lived, there was unmistakably one central authority.

It is difficult to doubt that his decision was right: it was impossible to devise a federal system, such as holds together the United States of America, for the several districts were not sufficiently developed to make it possible: if the Empire was to be saved at all, it could only be by giving it such unity as a supreme monarch could supply. The experiment was to fail, but it was a gallant attempt, and the system of adoption held out some hope (not destined to be fulfilled) that the evils of a disputed succession could in future be avoided.

In fact, it took eighteen years after his death—during which six rival emperors fought for supremacy—before Constantine was able once more to unite the whole Empire under a single rule. He held power for thirty years, and then, forgetting Diocletian's principle, allowed the Empire to be divided between his three sons.

By two important actions Constantine vitally affected the history of Europe: it is possible that he has received for neither the credit which he deserves. His recognition of Christianity as the official religion has been ascribed either to superstition (to his belief in a miraculous vision promising him victory in the sign of the Cross) or to mere statecraft, and the belief that the worship of a single God was more appropriate to a centralised despotism than that of a multitude of deities. No one would maintain that he was an enlightened Christian—he was only baptised on his deathbed, though his interest in Christianity was genuine—but it is at least possible that he was impressed by the moral elevation of the best Christians, and saw in that morality the best hope of restoring the national character. It is very doubtful whether the Christians were a strong enough body to give him valuable support, and whether he was not likely, from a political point of view,

to lose at least as much as he would gain by accepting the Christian faith. It is legitimate to give him the benefit of the doubt. That his hopes, if indeed he entertained them, were at any rate partially fulfilled is clear, for Christian principles soon began to make themselves felt, in the greater respect felt for human life, in the higher value set on purity, in the promotion of hospitals and in the alleviation of the lot of slaves.

Whether his decision was entirely for the good of the Christian Church is more disputable: even if we do not, with Dante, ascribe to Constantine the whole blame for the worldliness which was soon to assert itself, it is clear that power and prosperity were likely to test the Christian character very sharply, and that it was by no means strong enough entirely to resist the temptations which they brought. But this will call for later discussion, and he can hardly be held responsible for any Christian failure to rise to the opportunity which he offered.

Again, Constantine has been blamed for founding Constantinople, and thereby making the division of East and West inevitable. To this charge there is the obvious answer that all he did was to substitute a city on a magnificent site on the European side of the sea for the indefensible capital (Nicomedia) which Diocletian had established in Asia Minor. He was wise enough to see the danger which threatened from the East, and to take steps to meet it, thereby saving Europe for some thousand years. There is no one who better deserves the title of "a good European", and this is only forgotten because of the extraordinary and disastrous prejudice which has led us to forget that the Balkan Peninsula is a part of Europe—a prejudice for which we have had to pay very dearly. The self-absorption, or the naked selfishness, of Western Europe has brought its own revenges.

Constantinople was built in sixty years, and remained the centre of a government preserving the old traditions till it was stabbed in the back by the West in 1204 and finally destroyed by the East in 1453: for this priceless link with antiquity Europe has Constantine's genius to thank.

*From the Death of Constantine A.D. 337 to the Taking of Rome by Alaric A.D. 410*

Constantine, as we have said, divided the Empire among his three sons: the result was immediate civil war, followed in A.D. 364 by a definite division into East and West, and, though

the two were again united under Theodosius in A.D. 392, at his death three years later they were separated again.\*

The reign of Theodosius is important for two reasons: first, because in it paganism was definitely declared illegal and Christianity received the power to persecute (Julian's attempt to restore paganism in A.D. 361 had shown that it had lost its popular appeal); and, secondly, because of his policy of admitting the barbarian Goths within the Empire as federates or defenders.† This latter policy, though it secured peace for the time, led to the event which ends our period. Alaric, a Christian (though an Arian) Goth, aspired to high rank in the imperial service which other barbarians had attained. It was his restless ambition, and the desire for better lands for his people, which led him to invade Italy, and, when his demands were refused, led him to take Rome. Few lives were lost and little damage was done, but August 24th, 410, seemed to many to herald the imminent end of the world: the news drove Augustine to write of the City of God—the only city unshakable by the changes and chances of this mortal life.

### *Europe's debt to Rome*

At this point we should pause to consider what Rome had done for Europe. It is obviously impossible to answer the question in a few sentences, but a few suggestions may be made. Her material gifts can still be seen—her roads, her aqueducts and her buildings, great even in ruin. In the sphere of thought, her influence has been enormous—thanks to that Latin language “which has fought and conquered the centuries”. In speaking of Greece, it is natural to speak of the Greek spirit, as unmistakable as indefinable: in speaking of Rome, we more naturally think of the Roman *mind*—a mind pre-eminently practical and shrewd. One of the best judges and greatest admirers of Latin literature says that even when we read “a piece of oratory which sweeps us away or a poem instinct with beauty, yet we feel it to have been the outcome of an exercise of mind rather than a spontaneous outburst of the spirit”. (C. Bailey, *The Mind of Rome*, p. 2.)

This is why the Roman genius did its greatest and most enduring work in the field of law, and why it is our lawyers who are

\* By dividing the Empire between his two sons he made a division between East and West which lasted till A.D. 476, when the Western Emperor disappears.

† It is interesting to notice that, in the various divisions of East and West, the latter is always given some of the east coast of the Adriatic. The Italian need for harbours on that sea, as there are none on the eastern coast of Italy, is no new or imaginary thing.

most in its debt. This legal spirit had a great, and on the whole a disastrous, influence on Christianity: the Greek Fathers were at least as contentious as the Latin, but they were characteristically occupied in disputes as to the ultimate nature of God, whereas the Latin mind was exercised over comparatively juristic questions, of which the possible salvation of unbaptised infants is an extreme but not altogether unfair example. It is to the Romans that we owe that tendency to think of God as pre-eminently the Judge of men, which, with the emphasis naturally thrown on the Day of Judgment, was to play so large a part in Christian history.

Europe owes to Rome some centuries of good government—no small debt: an incomparable legal system, a lucidity of thought and expression which is beyond all praise, and some very great literature—but the higher things of the spirit were not hers to give, for the Romans were a practical and not an imaginative race.

### *European Unity (I)*

The taking of Rome symbolises in a very real sense the end of the first age of European history. It was Rome which had given it a unity which it was now unable to preserve, and nearly four centuries were to elapse before that unity was, briefly but dramatically, asserted once more.

Two pictures will show the distance which Europe travelled in the first 800 years of the Christian era. At its beginning we have the young Octavianus, the first citizen of Rome, entering on that wonderful career which was to win for him the great name of Augustus, and for Italy the unchallenged dominion of the civilised world. Eight hundred years later, when this dominion had demonstrably collapsed, we are to see a Frankish king kneeling in the cathedral of St. Peter, to be crowned by a Christian bishop, while the great chancel rings with the cry *Carolo Augusto, a Deo coronato, magno et pacifico imperatori, vita et victoria!*

It might seem that the two scenes have nothing in common save the one word "Augustus", but they are united by that pathetic search after unity which Europe has so long and so unsuccessfully pursued, to find its theory for a time in the doctrines of the mediæval church, to see that theory shattered by the crimes and ambitions of emperors and Popes and the rivalry of national powers, but still cherishing the unconquerable hope that, out of the intolerable agonies of the twentieth century, a new and more stable unity may be born.

### CHAPTER III

## The Coming of the Barbarians

The fifth century is pre-eminently the century of the coming of the barbarians, and to the casual reader it seems a century of inextricable confusion. We can only try to concentrate our attention on a few central points.

The barbarians descended upon a society which was ill-prepared to meet them: St. Jerome was right when he said "through our vices the barbarians are strong". The central government was weak, and its administration corrupt, the countryside depopulated, the great landowners greedy and selfish, the middle class rapidly decaying. But the domestic life of the upper classes, at any rate in Gaul, seems to have been happy and peaceful, untroubled by any fears of evil days to come. They were cultured people interested in great literature, if producing little of their own: interested also in Christianity whether they accepted it or not.

The story of one convert may be briefly summarised, both for its interest and its beauty. Paulinus, a middle-aged senator of great wealth, felt the call to the service of Christ: he sold his estates, and, after a painful parting with the great scholar Ausonius, who had been consul and praetorian prefect of Gaul, departed to Italy to serve as parish priest at the shrine of St. Felix at Nola. There he was when the Vandals took Rome: he spent what remained of his fortune, and even the treasures of the shrine, to ransom any captives that he could. At the last moment came a poor widow, pleading for her only son: Paulinus, having no more to give, sold himself to redeem him, and went as a slave to Africa. He became gardener to the king's son-in-law and, his identity being discovered, was sent back to Italy with a shipload of his fellow captives for indemnity. "On his deathbed he restored to communion all those whom for grievous error he had barred from the sacraments, and Jews and infidels followed him to his grave, weeping for their father." Miss Waddell (in whose *Wandering Scholars* this story should be read as a whole) rightly calls it "the most fragrant chapter in the history of the saints": it throws a vivid light on the problems of the fifth century.



We may leave it to others to question whence all the invaders came, and why they all came at approximately the same time. It is true that we have seen them knocking at the doors with varied success ever since the second century, but it is now that we have to face them in their bewildering numbers. Some have left their names in honour on the map of Europe—the Angles, the Franks, the Burgundians, the Saxons, the Lombards: some survived to their discredit in ordinary language like the Huns or the Vandals (who live also in the name Andalusia) or—most unjustly—the Goths, whose name has been given to an architecture which they did not invent and to a barbarism from which they were comparatively free.

### *Vandals and Huns*

We will look first at those of the barbarians whose invasions left no permanent influence on Europe. The Vandals crossed the upper Danube, and in 406 the Rhine; 408 saw them in Spain, which they practically subdued, and in A.D. 429, under their great king Gaiseric, they crossed the Strait of Gibraltar into Africa. They conquered the Roman province, and Rome (which thereby had lost its chief corn supply) was forced to recognise him as an independent king. His successor, Genseric, sacked Rome in A.D. 455. North Africa—though regained by Justinian in the next century—has never completely recovered from the Vandal invasion: it is difficult to realise that in the days of St. Augustine, who was Bishop of Hippo then, there were no less than fourteen Christian bishoprics in North Africa alone, excluding Cyrenaica and Egypt.  $VS^p\ N00 \leftarrow D068 \quad H6 \quad 5621.$

The Huns also can be summarily dealt with. It was the fear of these savage Mongolian horsemen which in the fourth century made the Visigoths move southward to seek the comparative safety of the Roman frontier, and indeed set all the tribes in motion to escape them. The famous Attila, some sixty years later, threatened both halves of the Empire, but the Romans with Visigothic help defeated him at Chalons in A.D. 451, and though he invaded Italy and threatened Rome, the Hun menace was at an end.\*

For practical purposes the Germanic or Teutonic invaders may be divided into two classes, the Goths and the Franks. Two very

\* It was to escape from him that the inhabitants of Aquileia took refuge on the islands on which Venice was afterwards to arise.

important facts are usually forgotten, first, that at one period it seemed highly probable that the Goths and not the Franks would play the leading part in moulding the history of Europe, and secondly, that the reason for their failure was religious.

### *Goths and Franks*

At the end of the fifth century the Visigoths held all southern Gaul and Spain: the Ostrogoths, under their great king Theodoric (493-526) held all Italy, he being nominally a vassal of the emperor at Constantinople, but really the first (and greatest) of Italian kings. Under his rule Goths and Romans lived happily side by side, each under their own laws: roads and aqueducts were restored, great palaces were built, especially at Ravenna, which he chose for his capital. Literature flourished (the great names are those of Boethius and Cassiodorus) \*: education was encouraged, religious toleration was general. The frontier was well defended, and he allied himself by marriage not only to his kinsmen the Visigoths, but also to the Franks and Burgundians of the North-West, and kept them from encroaching on Visigothic dominions until the end of the century. It looked as if a blend of Roman and Gothic influence was to dominate Europe. But this was not to be, and we have now to consider the reason.

Since early in the fourth century the Christian Church had been distracted by the heresy of Arius, and though the orthodox, or Catholic, cause had triumphed at Nicaea, Arianism was still widespread.†

The Arians were brave and zealous missionaries, and had converted the Goths, among other barbarians, to their faith. But the Catholic cause was so strong in the West that no stable government could be formed by any Arian power. In spite of Theodoric's toleration, this was to ruin his cause in Italy, as it ruined that of the Visigoths in France and Spain.

The decisive moment was the "conversion" of Clovis, the bloodthirsty leader of the Franks, in 496, which (most fortunately for him and his people) was to the Catholic faith. He at once

\* It was Cassiodorus who in the sixth century first set monks to work at copying manuscripts: the debt which literature owes to him can scarcely be overstated.

† Very roughly speaking, Arius thought that though Christ was a son of God he could not be *the* son of God, or equal to Him, which would imply that a son could be equal to his father. (It is characteristic of heretics to believe that logic has the final word.) It followed that Christ could not perfectly declare the will of God. Who remained unknowable, like "the veiled being" of Mr. Wells.

became the champion of the orthodox cause against the heretic Visigoths, and defeated them at a great battle in 507; Theodoric came to their help and won back Provence, but from that time their main base was in Spain. Visigothic kings survived there, but though they turned Catholic in 587, it was not in time to establish a really strong kingdom, and they fell before the Saracens in 711.

The fate of Italy was similar. After Theodoric's death in 526 no adequate successor appeared, and Justinian (see p. 33) welcomed the opportunity of recovering Italy for the Empire in full possession, and also dealing a blow for the orthodox cause (as he had already done by conquering the Arian Vandals in Africa). The Gothic war lasted for eighteen years. Justinian's great general, Belisarius, captured Ravenna by 540, but the war was by no means over, and it was not till 553 that the remnants of the Goths disappeared over the Alps. The length of their resistance proves the solidity of their power. Italy, weakened by these long wars, was soon to fall victim to a warlike German tribe, the Lombards.\*

So ended the prospect, which at one time seemed so bright, of a strong Gothic influence in Europe. We know perhaps too little of them to be able to say whether this was a blessing or a curse, but Theodoric as a man is so infinitely superior to anyone whom the Franks produced for several centuries, and his rule in Italy was so wise, that it is at least possible to regret that the Gothic influence had to yield to that of Franks and Lombards.

The interesting point which emerges is the strength of the Christian Church which the story displays. There is no doubt that, when the official Roman Government broke down before the barbarians, it was the Christian authorities, and primarily the bishops, who held the ancient society together,† but it is somewhat surprising to find that the Church was so influential in Gaul, Spain and Italy, as to make the rule of heretics ultimately im-

\* The defence of Rome, which he had captured, was the greatest military exploit of Belisarius; in the course of the siege the Goths cut the aqueducts and all the water which had once filled the Roman baths poured into the land round Rome. The result was that the Campagna became an unhealthy desert till Mussolini, much to his credit, took the matter in hand.

† Most conspicuous among these bishops is Leo I, who held the See of Rome from 440 to 461. His vigorous assertion of its claims as the unifying and directing power of Christendom has led some historians to describe him as "the first Pope": his success in saving Rome from Attila, with whom he negotiated as the representative of the Empire, has won him the title of "the Great"—an honour shared by only one of his successors.

possible—a fact which will be admitted even by those who regard its intolerance as unfortunate.\*

*“The Dark Ages”, from the Taking of Rome A.D. 410 to the Treaty of Verdun A.D. 843*

These are the centuries in which modern Europe begins, very tentatively, to take shape. The Treaty of Verdun has been taken as a limit because it was then that, with the division of Charlemagne's empire, a beginning was made of the division of Western and Central Europe into independent kingdoms.

Before we attempt to discuss the events of these four centuries, a protest must be made against the name “Dark Ages” so generally given to them. It can only be justified by the assumption that Western Europe is the only part worthy of consideration, and by forgetting the achievements of the Eastern or (as it should rightly be called) the Roman Empire, surviving, and at times gloriously surviving, in the East. This prejudice, which is slowly dying out, arises from the hatred felt by the Latin Church towards Constantinople: it is not necessary, or possible, to maintain that the East was always in the right in these religious disputes, though in some of them our sympathies may well be on its side, but Latin hostility (which in the end became the bitter hatred felt for those whom one has wronged) has too long coloured our view of history.

These “Dark Ages” produced men whose achievements will at any rate bear comparison with any from the four centuries which preceded them: great emperors, such as Justinian and Charlemagne; great soldiers like Belisarius or Heraclius; great statesmen like Gregory the Great or Theodoric; scholars like Alcuin; and saints like Aidan. In the field of literature it is true that the names are comparatively few, but Boethius at one end of the period and Bede towards the other are very far from negligible, and Procopius in the middle is no mean historian. In the field of art we can still

\* Though this is not the place for theological discussion, it must be said that the Arian heresy, though held by many excellent men, did in fact cut the ground from under the Christian faith. It turned on the question whether Christ should be described as “one” with God the Father in substance (or essence or nature)—*homoousios*—or “like” Him—*homoiousios*. This dispute has been absurdly described as distracting the world “for an iota”: it would be equally sensible to say that there is “only the difference of a vowel” between saying that a person is “good” and describing him as “God”. There is a sense in which all mankind, made in the image of God, is “of like nature” with Him, and if that is all that can be said of Christ, the question inevitably arises what degree of likeness can be ascribed to Him. The hard shell of doctrine may not in itself be attractive, but it is essential if the underlying truth is to be preserved. The triumph of the Goths, unless they could have been induced to abandon their Arianism, would inevitably have tended to undermine Christianity.

admire the glorious mosaics of Ravenna, and it is surely something of a paradox to regard an age as "dark" in which Anthemius was able to design the superb church of the Holy Wisdom (Santa Sophia).

### *Monasticism*

Again, it was the sixth century which saw the birth of that monastic movement which was vitally to affect the life of Europe for a thousand years. The life of a hermit had, since the days of St. Anthony (*b.* 251), attracted those who felt the obligation to live "unspotted by the world"; but the collapse of the Roman Empire made life "in the world" seem at once more dangerous to the devout and less attractive to the profane. Its result was the growth of societies, living together, by rule, a life of work and prayer.

There are some to whom the retreat from the world seems a confession of weakness, and some who doubt whether the majority of those who so retreated did so from the best of motives; but no one can question either the greatness or the beauty of the monastic ideal, or the profound influence which the attempt to realise it had upon Europe. For this it had to thank the genius of the great man who first gave it bodily form.

St. Benedict (*b.* about A.D. 480) has strong claims to be regarded as one of the most influential men in European history, and Viollet le Duc's dictum that the formation of his Order was "perhaps the most important historical fact in the whole Middle Ages" is by no means extravagant. Of that Order, with its home at Monte Cassino, the essential laws were Poverty, Obedience and Chastity, and it is worth while noting that, for its founder, labour was prior even to prayer. On these foundations was raised a great disciplined organisation at the command of God, or of His servant the Pope—the influence of which was incalculable.

It is not to be supposed that its members always, or for long, lived up to Benedict's ideal: there were always many who joined it in the hope to make the best of both worlds; but the really significant fact is that every reform of monasticism had for its motto the cry "Back to Benedict!" Four hundred years later the famous monastery of Cluny, founded about 910 and ruled for more than a century by remarkable abbots, took its inspiration from him and linked Benedictine congregations into one: two centuries later still, it was to Benedict's rule that the Cistercians endeavoured to recall a monasticism which had grown lax. Stephen

Harding, the true founder of Cîteaux (A.D. 1107), appealed from Cluny to Monte Cassino, and so did the greatest of all his followers, St. Bernard of Clairvaux, who came to Cîteaux five years later.

In every generation those who, like Chaucer's monk, found Benedict's rule "old and somewhat strict" dragged the standard down; but in every generation there were those who sought the way back to primitive Benedictinism, so long as the monastic movement retained its power to attract. Though we shall often find ourselves referring to the "Cluniac" influence, the ultimate source of it lay with Benedict of Nursia, and to him, rather than to any other man, that the greatest Popes, beginning with Gregory the Great, owed most of the greatness that was theirs.

Neglecting the sordid struggles of Frankish princes which have given the dark ages their sinister name, we shall deal first with the Roman Empire in the East: we shall have three great and dramatic stories to tell—how Justinian restored the empire to much of its former glory, and (as some say) ruined it in the process; how Heraclius, the conqueror of the Persians, had to meet the first challenge of Mahomet; how Leo III saved Constantinople and Europe from Islam; and how his puritan crusade finally shattered the unity of Christendom. We shall then return to the West, and trace the growth of the two powers which were later to dominate Europe, the Papacy and the Frankish kingdom, and see how they came to be linked in 800 in the Holy Roman Empire. For the moment we will only remark that during these centuries the barbarians were pouring down into the three great peninsulas of Greece, Italy and Spain, and slowly developing a new and settled life of their own.

### *The Roman Empire at Constantinople*

With this brief preface we will proceed to consider the one great civilised European state: the Roman Empire with its seat at Constantinople.

That Empire had during these centuries a great history, marred by some considerable failures, but marked by some glorious successes; they deserve to be far better known than they are.\*

\* As an example of the injustice done to it, Mr. Lecky's accusation of "perpetual fratricide" against the Byzantine emperors may be quoted. From 350 to 1453 there was no single emperor murdered by a brother, and only one dethroned (Oman, *Byzantine Empire*, p. 157). It is significant that in Mr. Fisher's great *History of Europe* there is only one chapter devoted to its history, though he does deal at length with Justinian and gives Leo the Isaurian full credit for saving Eastern Europe from the Saracens.

It must always be remembered that the Empire had two frontiers to defend: so far as Europe was concerned, its policy was, broadly speaking, to divert the barbarians to the other two peninsulas, and this was successful with the Visigoths, Ostrogoths and Lombards. But other barbarians took their place as a menace; when, for instance, the Lombards moved into Italy, the Avars poured into the lands they had left, and we soon begin to hear of the Bulgarians and Slavs. But the Empire had also its eastern frontier to guard, inheriting the ancient war with the Parthians, whose place was now taken by the Persians, with whom there was almost continuous war for a hundred years (527-628).

The fifth century provides no events of outstanding interest (apart from the building of the great walls of Constantinople which were to guard the city for a thousand years) except in the religious sphere. In it there were several events of importance: its first years were marked by the archbishopric of Chrysostom: in 451 the great Council of Chalcedon met to define the dual nature of Christ as God and man, and soon after, the Patriarchs asserted their claim to crown the emperor. This divine blessing perhaps encouraged the emperors to regard themselves as authorities on Christian doctrine: a well-meant attempt by one of them to secure unity among Christians was hotly resented by the Pope, who caused the Patriarch to be excommunicated (by a notice pinned on his back at Mass). He retaliated in kind, and there was a rupture between the Eastern and Western Churches for some forty years (till A.D. 519). This was "the beginning of sorrows" which were to culminate in the ruin of the Empire.

When the new century began, the Empire had for twenty-five years been ruled by capable men, chosen as emperors not for warlike qualities, but for distinction in what might be called the civil service. In 518 this tradition ended by the peaceable succession of the captain of the bodyguard, an Illyrian peasant, said to have been unable to write his own name: his only importance is that he nominated as his successor in 527 his nephew Justinian.

Justinian who, coming to the throne at the age of thirty-five, reigned for thirty-eight years (till A.D. 565), is one of the most amazing, though not one of the most attractive, of the great men of the world. Let us deal first with his defects. He was not personally brave, and on one famous occasion it was the heroism of his wife Theodora—the chorus girl whom, in defiance of scandal, he had raised to the throne—which saved him from yielding to a

riot by her famous reminder that "the imperial purple is a glorious shroud". He was a suspicious master, and his treatment of his great general Belisarius, though not as harsh as has been alleged, showed little sense of gratitude. He was inclined to superstition, and was excessively concerned, especially in his later years, with abstruse problems of theology, while, by closing the schools of Athens, he showed his distrust of profane learning. He was reckless of cost, either in money or life, where his cherished schemes were concerned, and it can hardly be denied that at his death he left the Empire weaker than he found it.

These charges are formidable and indeed unanswerable, but let us set against them the greatness of his achievement in the three fields of war, architecture and legal reform.

1. Rightly or wrongly—the point may be considered later—Justinian set before himself the idea of reconquering those Mediterranean lands which had once been in the possession of those Roman emperors whose undoubted heir he was. Six years after his accession (533) he attacked the Vandals in Africa, all the more readily because their Arian king was grievously oppressing the Catholics; within a year he had, by the genius of Belisarius, completely destroyed their power, and, though there was still hard fighting with the Moors from farther inland which lasted some fifteen years, by 548 the authority of the emperor stretched once more to Tangier, and along the whole south coast of the Mediterranean.

Encouraged by his success against the Vandals, next year (534) Justinian attacked the Goths in Sicily and Italy. As has already been said, this policy proved in the end disastrous, but there were, or at least appeared to be, strong reasons for pursuing it. Theodoric was dead; anarchy had broken out, and a queen, friendly to Constantinople, had been imprisoned and murdered. Add to this the old grievance that the Goths were Arians, and there were good grounds for the attempt to recapture what had, after all, been the heart of the Empire.

Belisarius took Sicily with ease and was soon in Rome, where he was besieged for a year, holding twelve miles of walls with 5,000 men against ten or twenty times that number. In 539 he took Ravenna, the Gothic capital, and, refusing the Gothic crown which was offered him, accepted instead the title "Gothicus" and a triumphal reception in Byzantium in 540. The country was not completely subdued for another fourteen years: thereafter an



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who encourages him, but there can be no doubt that in the lavish support which he gave to architecture, and in his choice of architect, Justinian deserves praise similar to that given to Augustus as the enlightened patron of literature.

3. It is on his fame as a legislator that Justinian's claim to greatness most securely rests. What he did can only be told in the briefest summary. He had to deal with two great bodies of law, the old law (*Ius vetus*) consisting of the statutes of the republic and early Empire, and the new (*Ius novum*) comprising the ordinances of later emperors. Both were uncertain, contradictory and sometimes obsolete or inaccessible.

He first, as soon as he became emperor, tackled the easier problem of codifying the "new" law and produced the Codex Justinianus. Two years later he appointed another commission to deal with the "old" law, and the result was the Digest or Pandects, in fifty volumes, "the most remarkable and important law book that the world has ever seen".\*

Finally, he published the *Institutes*, a text-book for the use of students. It may be noticed as a curious and significant fact that while Justinian insists on Latin as the official language, he felt himself compelled to publish many of his later laws in Greek, that they might be more readily understood.

Dante, who felt, as Justinian did himself, that the Roman people was as truly God's agent for the spreading of law as the Jewish had been for the spreading of religion, assigned to him a lofty place in Paradise, and the influence of his work, mainly for good, is felt to the present day. He must, for this alone, be ranked among the very few men who have vitally affected the life and thought of the Western world.

It is common to condemn Justinian as a failure because so much of his work as an emperor was so soon swept away, and because his wars and his buildings left the Empire poorer than he found it. The fact is undeniable, but there are circumstances to be urged in mitigation of the verdict.

He believed in the destiny of Rome, and regarded himself as an exponent of its undying policy: no doubt personal ambition played a part, but it should seem that it was the glory of Rome, not the glory of Justinian, that he primarily sought. If we give him, as we surely may, the credit for believing in its future, he

\* Moss, *The Birth of the Middle Ages*, p. 111. I should like to take this opportunity of acknowledging my debt to this admirable, learned and most interesting book.

atmosphere of Constantinople, where theology (even in its most arid developments) was the one absorbing topic of conversation. A Western ruler called to deal with the Monophysite controversy would feel himself out of his depth. Justinian could not escape it, and, it must be allowed, had no sort of wish to do so. He did his best, it has been said, "to plaster over the crack which this heresy was driving through the eastern half of his Empire". In the process he came into conflict with the Pope—not as yet an international figure—and transported him by force to Constantinople.

In fact, Justinian regarded himself, like Henry VIII, as the ultimate authority in Church as in State; he was a devout and learned Christian, and encouraged missions both to the Slavs and to the Far East; and his main purpose was the honourable one of securing unity through obedience to the decisions of councils. But "Caesaro-papism" is not a doctrine which has ever found acceptance in the West (as Pope Boniface VIII was to find to his cost), and Justinian's efforts were unsuccessful both in reconciling the disputes of the East and in securing more than a forced acquiescence from Rome. He was the outstanding example of that domination of the secular power over the Church which (though not unwelcome at Constantinople) was rightly abhorrent to Western ideas. And so we take leave of Justinian, the most remarkable and most influential man in Europe since the days of Augustus.

It is a great and exciting period of history, full of possibilities which were never to be realised and dreams which were to prove false. Constantinople, never more glorious than in this century, "lies", it has been well said, "like some pinnacled city in a mediaeval miniature . . . bathed in the sunshine of Western dreams. But from the Eastern aspect it glows with a more baleful light. Under a stormy sky the domes glitter, the walls are topped with spears; before the ramparts stand the long rows of Avar tents, and bands of Arab horsemen scour the desolate plains. The relentless ring of barbarians edges closer, burning to ravish 'the city of the world's desire' ". (Moss, *op. cit.*, p. 94.)

### *The Coming of Islam*

It should be more clearly recognised that the seventh century marks the real division between ancient and modern history: other dates which have been suggested, such as the end of the Roman Empire in Europe in 476, are trivial, and the coronation

His wars with the Persians, brilliant though they were, containing "feats of arms such as have seldom been paralleled in all history" (*ibid.*), do not really form part of the history of Europe—but one point in them is worth noticing. Chosroes, king of Persia, captured not only Damascus but Jerusalem, carrying off the True Cross to Persia, and this gave the war the character of a crusade. The Church took the lead, and the Patriarch lent for the war all the gold and silver plate of Constantinople. It was the first, and by no means the least, or the least glorious, of the crusades.\*

The war ended in complete victory: all Roman territory was evacuated, all Roman captives freed, an indemnity paid and the True Cross brought back in triumph to Constantinople. When we add that two years before that the capital had successfully beaten off the attack of 80,000 Avars and Slavs, we shall allow that it was not yet the home of a decadent people. If Justinian is to be blamed for the disasters which befell his subjects in the half-century after his death, he is surely entitled to some share in the credit for their victories. Though the cost may have been ruinous, it would seem that he had restored, or strengthened, Roman patriotism and self-respect.

But in the very hour of triumph the blow fell. Heraclius received a letter from an obscure Arabian prophet bidding him accept a new revelation, described as "Islam" or "Submission to God". The rest of his life was to be spent in unsuccessful efforts to resist the armies of Mahomet.†

A fatal battle at the Hieromax, an eastern tributary of the Jordan, in 634 lost to the Empire all Syria east of that river; Antioch and Jerusalem fell three years later; by 640 Mesopotamia had been lost, and the port of Caesarea, opening the way for the enemy into Asia Minor, and all Egypt except Alexandria was in Saracen hands before Heraclius died in the following year.

\* The opening of the Persian king's letter is worth quoting: "Chosroes, greatest of gods, and master of the whole earth, to Heraclius, his vile and insensate slave . . . you say that you trust in your god. Why has he not delivered out of my hand Caesarea, Jerusalem and Alexandria? And shall I not also destroy Constantinople?" Despots from Sennacherib to Hitler show a striking similarity of vocabulary.

† Mahomet's flight from Mecca to Medina (the Hegira) took place in 622: his creed arose from a natural reaction against Christian disputes as to God's nature which Mahomet countered with a stark monotheism. The great attraction of the religion which he preached lies in its simplicity: it exalts God's power and bids man to obey, not to love: it defines man's duty precisely, and provides him in the Koran with an infallible book: it encourages "holy wars" to propagate the faith, and its fatalism produces superb soldiers. But for these same reasons it is hostile to progress, in Church or State, and the despotisms of the East are its legitimate offspring. But it unites its followers in a brotherhood which Christianity has too often failed to secure.

*The Eighth Century. Leo the Isaurian*

The anarchy with which, as has been said, the century began was only ended in 717, when Leo the Isaurian was chosen emperor. (The Isaurians came from Asia Minor, though his family had recently migrated to Thrace.) He is one of the greatest and most important figures in the history of the Empire, which his family were to rule for the rest of the century.

No sooner had he been crowned than there came an attack on Constantinople, far more serious than anything which had preceded it. The Caliph had raised an army of 80,000 men, and a fleet of 18,000 sail, carrying perhaps as many more: fleet and army met at Abydos on the Hellespont. They built a wall round the city cutting it off from Thrace and also attacked by sea; the attempt was defeated by Leo's galleys and fire vessels, and the winter months ("generals December, January and February") took a heavy toll of the Saracen host on land. Next year, 718, Leo took the offensive, burnt the Egyptian fleet, and, with help from the Bulgarians, inflicted such losses on the army that the siege was raised and comparatively few of the great host returned safely to Asia.

Leo, says Gibbon, is "known to posterity by the invectives of his enemies"; later writers have helped to repair the injustice, "to Leo, far more than to his contemporary, the Frank, Charles Martel (see p. 52), is the delivery of Christendom from the Moslem danger to be attributed. Charles turned back a plundering horde sent out from an outlying province of the Caliphate; Leo repulsed the grand army of the Saracens" (Oman, p. 187). "That the Russian Church is Greek and not Moslem to-day", says another historian (Fisher), "is one of the results which may, without a great stretch of possibility, be attributed to his great and resounding triumph". He adds that "the name of Leo should be remembered"; we have now to see why that remembrance is so imperfect, and why it is that thousands have heard of Charles Martel for one who knows anything of Leo the Isaurian.

The reason is that Leo the Isaurian was also Leo the Iconoclast. In his campaign against image worship (as he saw it) he took the side of the puritan East as against the more tolerant or more superstitious West, championed in this case by Rome. As his was the losing side, and as most of our authorities come from the other, his undeniable greatness as general and administrator is obscured by his undeserved reputation as a heretic.

and the influence of ecclesiastical ideas can be seen. This process lasted for nearly 200 years, after which came a reversion to the principles of Justinian. Constantinople held firmly to the indivisibility of Church and State, and was equally jealous of attempts by the emperor to dominate the Church (as was shown in the iconoclastic controversy) and of the Church to assert its independence. This latter characteristic inevitably brought it into conflict with the conceptions of the Roman Church, which were beginning to become more clearly defined.

### *A.D. 800-43 in the East*

Soon after Irene's deposition in 802,\* the Bulgarians attacked Constantinople, and an emperor and his son and heir lost their lives in battle; they were avenged by their successor, who so overwhelmed the Bulgarians that they gave no further trouble for half a century. But in the reign of Michael II the Amorion † the Saracens took Crete (826) which they were to hold for 150 years, greatly hampering trade in the Mediterranean, and a year later the Moors began an invasion of Sicily.

But the main interest of those years lies still in the iconoclastic controversy: the emperors, generally speaking, were opposed to images, but one who attempted a compromise (by which images were to be hung so high that they could not be touched or kissed) only earned thereby the name of the Chameleon. The Emperor Theophilus (in spite of his wife Theodora) started a violent campaign against them, but on his death in 842 she reversed his policy and February 19th, 843, became a festival in honour of "image worship and Theodora". That year is thus significant in the East as in the West.‡

It is easy for the Western mind to sneer at these prolonged disputes, and indeed there is no excuse for the violence with which they were conducted, but it is worth remarking that they were at least neither selfish nor sordid, but concerned with what both sides regarded as a matter of principle. From that point of view

\* Irene is connected with two famous names: Charlemagne is said to have suggested marrying her, and she paid tribute to Haroun al Raschid.

† The name Michael now becomes common, appearances of the Archangel leading to many dedications of shrines in his name: this was to have an important effect on European history (see p. 88 n.). Michael's accession was brought about in remarkable circumstances. He was awaiting death in prison on Christmas Eve for high treason: his friends murdered the emperor in Santa Sophia on Christmas Day, and he was enthroned while still wearing his fetters.

‡ "Eikons" were thereafter allowed, provided that they were purely pictorial: no statues were ever again set up in Eastern churches.

they compare favourably with later disputes among Christians even in the enlightened West.

These four and a half centuries of the history of the Roman Empire cannot fairly be described as "dark": they contain great men and moving incidents, and if they are on the whole years of decline, it is a decline which is gradual in comparison with that of the centuries preceding them. The Empire was definitely becoming Greek: the Balkan peninsula was by now Greco-Slav rather than Greco-Roman: but to speak of it as becoming Oriental in its outlook is a considerable exaggeration. It was no doubt much concerned, as always, with the East, but there is no apparent reason why the Bulgarians should not be regarded as of European concern.

Again, its cultural decline would seem to have been exaggerated. It is true that the century of Heraclius produced neither art nor literature, but Theophilus, the last emperor we have mentioned, was a considerable builder, and delighted in gold and silver work of all kinds: his throne, with golden lions at its foot, which rose and roared by some mechanical device, may not have been in the best of taste, but was clearly a triumph of craftsmanship. And the decline of literature cannot have been complete in view of the great output of books which the next century was to see.

In spite of a serious defeat by the Saracens, Theophilus was able to increase the Empire's trade, and made commercial treaties with Charlemagne's son, and even with the Emir of Cordova. Though Crete was a serious loss, the Empire, so far as trade was concerned, gained more than it lost by the Moorish attacks on Sicily which crippled the Italian ports.

We have spent a long time in the East because it is the only part of Europe in which history for those four centuries is coherent and continuous. It has brought us into occasional contact with Western affairs; we have seen how Justinian fatally weakened the Goths in Italy, so that they fell an easy prey to the Lombards before the end of the sixth century; we have seen the growth of serious misunderstanding between the Church of Rome and the Church of Constantinople. It is time now to turn to the two powers which arose in the West between 410 and 843, the Papacy and the Holy Roman Empire, and say a few words about England, though its influence on the European affairs was only in its infancy.

## The Papacy : Growth of Frankish Power

*The Papacy 410-843*

It is with Gregory the Great, Pope from 590 to 604, that the Papacy first enters on the stage of European, as opposed to ecclesiastical or Italian, history. In the latter field, the greatest of his predecessors, Leo, had won fame by inducing Attila to withdraw from Italy in 452, but while the Arian Visigoths dominated Italy, the papal authority was limited to Rome and "the Patrimony of St. Peter" mostly in its neighbourhood, and the Popes had little influence with Theodoric. In 498, in spite of his Arianism, the Gothic king was actually called in to arbitrate between two rival candidates for the papal throne, and a quarter of a century later a Pope died in prison at Theodoric's capital of Ravenna.

Justinian's conquest of the Goths removed that menace, but only to substitute the more serious threat of domination by Constantinople: the emperor showed little respect for the Papacy, summoning one Pope to the East and keeping him a prisoner for six years till he accepted the imperial view on a point of theology; and when the Lombards, shortly after Justinian's death, conquered Italy in 568 it might well seem that the position of the Papacy was worse than ever before. The Lombards, far less tolerant Arians than the Visigoths, held almost the whole country: with some small exceptions, only the exarchate of Ravenna and the Patrimony (now known as the Duchy of Rome) remained in Roman hands, and there was no reason to expect much consideration from the Roman emperors at Constantinople. The Papacy was compared by Gregory when he ascended the throne (which he did with much reluctance) to "an old and violently shattered ship, admitting the waters on all sides, its timbers rotten, shaken by daily storms, and sounding of wreck".

By the greatness of his personal character he was able to retrieve the situation, and to lay the foundations on which papal power in Europe was afterwards erected. He entered into relations with the rulers of Spain, whose kings through his agency became Catholic, he endeavoured to assert papal authority among the Franks, he sent Augustine on his mission to England; he, more



The successors of Gregory for more than a century after his death in 604 had neither the ability nor the character to develop his policy. They were occupied with questions arising from their waning loyalty to the emperors at Constantinople and their persistent hostility to their neighbours the Lombards.

Apart from all questions of heresy (in which they involved one unfortunate Pope) the emperors of the house of Heraclius treated the Popes with little respect: one was seized and banished to the Crimea, and the imperial policy sometimes favoured Ravenna at the expense of Rome. The anarchy caused by Justinian II helped the Popes to assert themselves as against the Exarch, and relations were becoming strained: the iconoclastic edict of Leo III in 726 was to precipitate the rupture.

Gregory II refused to obey it, with general support throughout Italy: the Lombards took the opportunity of invading the exarchate which was in rebellion, and captured all of it except Ravenna. Gregory was in a dilemma, for, as will be seen, the Papacy liked the Lombards as little as Constantinople, so he nominally returned to his allegiance before his death in 730. His successor, of the same name, shared his views, and after the failure, through a storm, of a great expedition sent out from Constantinople—the last serious attempt to recover central Italy—the allegiance became more nominal than ever.

But their second problem, the Lombards, remained and grew more serious. The great Gregory had been content to live at peace with them and to work for their conversion to the Catholic faith: this had now been achieved, but papal hostility did not diminish. As the Lombards, under two remarkable kings (Rothari the lawgiver 636-52 and Liutprand 712-43), had made great strides in civilisation and had given peace to most of Italy, it is to be feared that it was jealousy for his temporal power which made Gregory III in 738 take the momentous step of inviting help from across the Alps. He sent to Charles Martel (see p. 52) the keys of the tomb of St. Peter, gave him the high-sounding title of "Patrician", and called upon him to defend the Holy City. Few acts of otherwise unimportant men have had graver consequences: when it is added that in this particular quarrel the Lombard appears to have been in the right and the Pope in the wrong, and that the quarrel, such as it was, was peacefully settled two or three years later, it will be seen that Italy has good cause to execrate the memory of Gregory III.

than the Exarch at Ravenna, was the true representative of Roman interests in Italy, and was one of the signatories of a treaty of peace with the Lombards in 599.

But while he was thus maintaining the imperial cause, his own relations with Constantinople were by no means happy. Though he was ready to call for the emperor's assistance in reducing recalcitrant Illyrians to obedience, or in repressing heretics in Africa, he was very suspicious both of the emperor's claims to interfere in religious matters and of the pretensions of Constantinople to anything like equality with Rome. When the Patriarch claimed the title of "Oecumenical" he denounced him in unmeasured terms, declaring that the name "universal Pope" was a monstrous thing. He preferred to style himself *servus servorum Dei*, little knowing that his successors, while retaining this title, were also before long to claim the other. It was because the Emperor Maurice upheld his Patriarch that Gregory unfeignedly rejoiced in his downfall, which explains, though it cannot justify, the letters which he wrote to his murderer Phocas (see p. 38).

To him the Church was very definitely above the State, and he looked at all things from the point of view of its interest. He cared little for learning or for history, professing ignorance of Greek and discouraging classical studies: art he valued only for its religious use, for "pictures are to the unlearned what books are to the learned". But as an administrator he was supreme. The great papal states were brought into order, and he could no more tolerate corruption among his agents than simony among his clergy; the letters which he wrote to Augustine show the wisdom with which he could deal with a heathen people.

He was indeed a really great man: it has been well said that while in one aspect "he foreshadows the papal domination of the West and the temporal power of the Church", in another he recalls "those noble Romans turned bishop who, through the wreckage of the Empire, led their retainers in a desperate fight against the swamping deluge of barbarian invasion." (Moss, *op. cit.*, p. 136.) His success was due to the strength and nobility of his character, and he cannot but be admired even by those who regret developments of his principles which he did not altogether foresee, and some of which he would certainly have deplored.\*

\* He has been blamed for the friendly tone of his letters to the notorious Brynhilda, but it may fairly be urged that he regarded her solely as (in the mysterious providence of God) the only agent by which any good results could be secured in the Frankish kingdom. He was above all things a realist.

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Charles accepted the title, though not the invitation, but a disastrous precedent had been set which was to have momentous results. The foreigner had for the first time been invited into Italy by an Italian; every subsequent invasion can be traced to this disastrous invitation to the Franks to disregard the natural barrier of the Alps, and the results to Italy, the papacy and the world have been incalculable.\*

Justinian had prevented the Goths from building up a lasting Italian kingdom: it was the Popes who, with less excuse, denied that opportunity to the Lombards. It should be remembered that most of our knowledge of the Lombards comes from their enemies, but Gibbon reminds us that "their laws have been esteemed the least imperfect of the barbaric codes". He adds that "the succession of their kings is marked with virtue and ability; the troubled series of their annals is adorned with fair intervals of peace, order and domestic happiness; and the Italians enjoyed a milder and more equitable government than any of the other kingdoms which had been founded on the ruins of the Western Empire". If this verdict is true, it would seem that the hostility of the Popes was more selfish than altruistic, and that a strong Lombard kingdom of Italy might have been a blessing to Europe.

Again, the Popes wished to free themselves from the domination of Constantinople, and we can sympathise with their desire: they did not see that they would be involving themselves in disputes with a temporal power nearer home which were to distract Europe for centuries and, after a brief moment of triumph, to bring the Papacy itself to the verge of ruin.

It was not long before the precedent which Gregory III had set was followed: in 753 Pope Stephen, threatened by Lombard aggression, crossed the Alps and appealed in person to Pepin, King of the Franks. Pepin owed the Papacy a debt of gratitude for it had given him its blessing when he had turned himself a year before from a Mayor of the palace into a king (see p. 53).

Stephen now solemnly crowned him, his wife and his sons, and received his reward when next year the Franks poured down into Italy. The Lombard king was defeated and did homage, promising to restore to the Roman See all that belonged to it.

\* No doubt it can be said that this is "wisdom after the event", and that the idea of an Italian nation had as yet occurred to no one, but it is surely clear that Italy is naturally designed as a unity and that to invite new (though Catholic) barbarian invaders was to sin against the divine laws of geography. It was a sin often repeated in Italian history.

But he did not keep his promise, as perhaps had never been his intention, and a year later he again attacked Rome. Another appeal to the Franks brought them into Italy once more, and this time their terms were harder; he was forced to surrender the Exarchate, which was formally handed to the Pope. For good or for evil the Pope had become an important secular prince, a position which he was to hold for more than a thousand years.

It is against Pepin, and not against Constantine, that Dante's famous malediction should have been hurled, for it was he who was the true founder of the temporal power of the Papacy.\*

Charlemagne, when he succeeded his father Pepin in 768, was only too ready to continue his Italian policy for, as we shall see, he was personally the enemy of the Lombard king: he invaded Lombardy in 773, and next year visited Rome, when he confirmed his father's donation to the Pope. Though he in that same year assumed the iron crown of Lombardy at Pavia and made an end of the Lombard kings, the Lombard dukes continued to be a thorn in the side of the Papacy, and he had to make two or three more expeditions to Italy in response to papal appeals. In 797 Pope Leo III had a more personal reason to ask for help. He was driven from Rome by a faction, and fled to Westphalia to seek Charles's protection. He was escorted back by Frankish troops, and acquitted after formal trial of the charges brought against him. Charles announced his intention of spending the Christmas of 800 in Rome and pronouncing there the formal sentence of acquittal.

It is uncertain how far the dramatic scene which followed had been previously rehearsed. Papal allegiance to the Empire, as we have seen, had long been doubtful; the idea of its unity still survived, and it was clearly desirable that Christendom should have an undisputed head, a position which the Pope could certainly not in those days have claimed for himself. At the moment the Empire at Constantinople was held by a woman, the regrettable Irene, and though she was personally orthodox, the situation had no precedent; nor could the Pope forget that she might well be succeeded (as in fact she soon was) by a detestable iconoclast.

\**Abi, Costantin! Di quanto mal fu madre  
Non la tua conversion, ma quella dote  
Che da te prese il primo ricco padre.*

The so-called "donation of Constantine", giving to the Pope "the city of Rome and all the provinces, places and cities of Italy and the Western regions" is a pious fraud dating from between 750 and 770.

Charles, on the other hand, was a Catholic prince of unquestioned power, already in full possession of the greater part of Italy: did not the logic of facts demand that he should be recognised as the Christian Emperor, the successor both of Augustus and of Constantine? The Pope took the decisive step, and on Christmas Day, 800, crowned Charles in St. Peter's.

Leo had, of course, no legal authority to bestow the imperial crown, but it would be wrong to blame him for that: he was a realist, and might claim that he was merely giving recognition to an established fact. Nor is it fair to criticise him for not making sure that the act of coronation was regarded in the same light by Charles and by himself. No such agreement could have been reached, even if Charles was in fact consulted beforehand (as he used to declare that he was not). But the ambiguity was real and dangerous. Leo might claim that he bestowed the crown; Charles, on the other hand, would have felt that the situation was more truly summarised in a prayer of Alcuin—"may the ruler of the Church be rightly ruled by thee, O King, and mayest thou be ruled by the right hand of the Almighty". History records that neither petition was consistently granted.

But there are two criticisms of his action which must be made, and they are very serious. In the first place, he was consecrating the "unhappy division" between East and West which was to produce unnumbered evils for Europe; Irene might be negligible, but any strong emperor at Constantinople was bound to resent the existence of a rival in the West. In theory, no doubt, they might divide Europe on the lines which Diocletian had suggested long before, or on those which Theodosius had followed (see p. 23), and work harmoniously together; but, in fact, Leo was inaugurating a policy which led inevitably to the disastrous weakening of Christendom.

And secondly, he was acting on the assumption that future rulers of the Franks would be as strong, as pious and as wise as Charlemagne, and that assumption was rapidly to be falsified, as Leo should have foreseen it would be. Charles was already well advanced in years—he had been thirty-two years on the throne—and it was the wildest optimism to suppose either that his descendants would not claim the imperial title or that they would be strong enough to support it. It was one thing for the Papacy to secure the alliance of the greatest monarch in Europe; it was quite another for it to be committed to close relationship with

any Frankish prince who could claim a temporary leadership among his rivals. Leo's action had far more excuse than that of Gregory III, and it is indeed arguable that, on balance, the institution of "the Holy Roman Empire" did more good than harm to Europe, but to Italy and to Germany it brought nothing but disaster. It ruined the possibility of either becoming a united and stable country, and their instability produced results so costly and so far-reaching that it would be easier to maintain the proposition that the events of Christmas Day, 800, proved a curse rather than a blessing.

Leo and Charles between them had kindled, we may say, the fire which was to burn with various degrees of intensity for a thousand years. There were moments, all too brief, in the first five centuries of its existence when men were able to warm their hands before it and to rejoice in its light, but for its last 500 years *it was slowly dying out, till its embers were finally quenched at Austerlitz*. But fire has its dangers as well as its blessings, and there were times when all Europe shuddered at its conflagration. Once more, a fire demands fuel, and the fuel which the Holy Roman Empire consumed was nothing less than the unity, peace and happiness of Italy and Germany, whose rulers had conspired to create it.

### *The Growth of the Frankish Power 410-843*

We have now to explain how Charlemagne came to be in a position to receive such an offer. The fortunate fact that Clovis was "converted" to the Catholic and not the Arian faith in 497 was really the foundation of Frankish power\*: it enabled him ten years later to defeat the Visigoths and to take Aquitaine with the approval of its Roman inhabitants; in 535 they had also seized Provence. As by that time Burgundy had also been conquered, the Frankish king had a compact and coherent kingdom.

By the end of the sixth century the Franks ruled all modern France and much of central Germany, though not all of it directly. Their power was weakened by the constant divisions which took place at a king's death, and the struggles between the various rulers, whose characters were almost uniformly detestable, form, on the whole, "the most hopeless and depressing page in the history of Europe" (Oman, *Dark Ages*, p. 159).

\* The most (and perhaps the only) creditable fact recalled of Clovis is that when he first heard the story of the crucifixion, he exclaimed: "Why was I not there with my Franks?"

The most important of these divisions was that into Austrasia, the eastern half, and Neustria (Ni-Wistria) the western, and after the terrible Brynhilda had met a horrible end in 613 \*—it is a proof of the low level of Frankish civilisation that she was roughly contemporary with Gregory the Great and Heraclius—it was not long before the Mayors of the Palace began to usurp the powers of the royal house which bears in history the name of Merovingian. The first who asserted himself with success was Pepin, Mayor of the Palace in Austrasia for twenty-six years (688–714), who did much to restore the boundaries of that kingdom, and also, a new fact in Frankish history, took some steps to convert the Germans from paganism.

Charles Martel, his (illegitimate) son, succeeded him and established once for all the supremacy of Austrasia over Neustria (718). He carried on his father's work and both strengthened and enlarged the Frankish borders towards Germany. He is famous for his victory over the Saracens at Poitiers (or Tours) in 732, but for which (in Gibbon's famous phrase) "the interpretation of the Koran would perhaps now be taught in the schools of Oxford". Though this must be regarded as an exaggeration, there is no doubt that Charles Martel rendered a great service to Europe and we must desert the main story of Frankish history to explain why it had become necessary.

The Saracens had swept along the north coast of Africa, taking Carthage in 695, and in 711 entered Europe by what we have called the front door from Africa. Gibraltar (Jebel-Tarik) still recalls the name of Tarik, their commander. In the same year they overthrew the Visigoths under their king Roderic ("the last of the Goths"), and, by 713, had overrun all Spain except the mountainous coast of the Bay of Biscay. They could not conquer the Basques, but they could and did surmount the Pyrenees, and unsuccessfully attacked Toulouse in 720. They came again in 725, and gained part of Aquitaine, not without some help from its Duke, whose rebellion Charles had to suppress. Finally, in 732, a very large army challenged for the possession of Aquitaine: this was the host which Charles defeated—a great victory of infantry over cavalry.

How great the danger was it is impossible to say: some hold that they aimed only at Aquitaine, and had, in fact, after reaching

\* She was scourged and bound by hands and feet to the heels of a wild horse which dragged her till she was torn limb from limb: she had dominated Austrasia for forty years.



Bordeaux, aimed at nothing more than plunder; Frankish writers, with whom, as we have seen, Gibbon agrees, naturally magnify the danger in order to extol the hero. They may be right, but in any case it was not a deliberate attempt to strike at the heart of Christendom, such as that which Leo the Isaurian had repelled fourteen years before.

It would have been possible, and indeed natural, for Charles to depose his nominal sovereign and take the crown, the power of which had long been his, but he died, still a Mayor, in 741, having raised the kingdom to a height of power unknown before. He followed the evil precedent of dividing the realm once more, but his two sons ruled in harmony for six years till one of them abdicated, leaving his brother Pepin as Mayor both of Austrasia and Neustria. The years of their joint rule saw the great missionary work of St. Boniface (a man of Crediton in Devon) in the newly converted lands of central Germany, and among the heathen Frisians from whom he was to meet his death.

Pepin, as we have already seen, recognised the facts, and assumed the title of king: he accepted the invitation which Charles had refused and came to the help of the Popes against the Lombards. Like his father, he had to deal with rebellious vassals in Aquitaine and annexed it formally to his crown, also driving the Saracens behind the Pyrenees. He was a great figure in Europe, courted both by the Caliphs of Baghdad and by the emperor in Constantinople. He maintained and heightened the reputation of his house for piety and was a worthy father of his great son.

Strange as it may seem, he repeated the old mistake of dividing his kingdom between his two sons, and on this occasion the danger was only removed by the fortunate death of one of them three years after his father. In 771 Charles, later to be called the Great, was undisputed king of all the Frankish dominions.

Before we attempt to deal with his achievements we may pause to reflect on the singular good fortune which gave the country from one family in four succeeding generations four men of such high ability and character to rule its affairs: it would be difficult to find a parallel to the service which this one house gave for a century and a half (668-814).

Before their day the Merovingian house of Clovis had made government a farce, and its attachment to religion had been almost nominal. The slight influence which the Church possessed

is shown by the extreme courtesy which Gregory the Great felt bound to show to Queen Brynhilda. With the rise of the house of Pepin all this is changed: the central government asserts its authority and, as became a family which claimed a saint as their ancestor (St. Arnulf, Bishop of Metz, died 641), the great Mayors show themselves earnest Christians. In their day, when St. Boniface proclaims the Christian faith in Germany, it is significant that he bids his converts swear allegiance to St. Peter and to the Pope, his vicar. When King Pepin asks the Pope's blessing on his acceptance of the royal title, the Church is clearly recognised as closely concerned with the whole welfare of the State. The Merovings had claimed descent from a legendary sun-god: the papal blessing was a Christian repartee to these pagan claims.

How much this could be held to involve was a matter for the future to decide: the Patriarch had for 300 years claimed the right to crown the emperors at Constantinople, but that had by no means prevented them from asserting at times their right to dominate the Church.

### *Charlemagne 768-814\**

Without going deeply into the very complicated question of national origin, we can, and should, remember that the Franks never penetrated in large numbers south of the Loire: there the population was in the main Gallo-Roman; similarly in the north there were regions such as Brittany which the Franks never reached. Charles had his capital at Aachen, and his family traditions connected him rather with Austrasia, which reached deep into Germany, than with Neustria, which reached to the Western sea, or with Aquitaine and Burgundy to the south. He was a Frank, not a Frenchman.

The borders of the kingdom to which he succeeded were formed by the two vassal peoples of Frisia and Bavaria, beyond whom lay respectively the Saxons in the north and the Czechs and Avars farther south: beyond the Pyrenees were the Saracens in Spain and the Lombards in Italy. Before his death the Saxons had been conquered in a series of savage and difficult wars, involving at least five campaigns besides punitive expeditions.

\* Professor Freeman, that staunch Germanophil, was wont to protest against the insidious process by which the French use the resources of their language to establish a very doubtful claim: Elsass-Lothringen, he would say, has a very different (and a much truer) sound than Alsace-Lorraine—and the name Charlemagne disguises the fact that the great Charles was primarily a German—Karl der Grosse.

Bavaria had been annexed to the Empire; the Czechs of Bohemia and the Avars had been reduced to paying tribute; the "Spanish March" across the Pyrenees had been won from the Saracens; \* the Lombards (see p. 53) had been crushed and Charles wore their iron crown.

Attempts were made, in the best family tradition, to carry Christianity to all the conquered peoples, except to the Saracens who would not accept it and to the Lombards who were Christians already. Charles made much use of the Church as an agent of government. The Saxon Capitulary, issued after the Conquest, ends with the words "Let the priest see to it that these orders are not disobeyed". The Saxon religion, which allowed ritual cannibalism and human sacrifice, was a barbarous one, but that did not justify the ordinance punishing the refusal of baptism with death. Alcuin, Charles's wisest counsellor, warned him that "you may force a man to the font, but not to the faith", but it took a fresh Saxon revolt to get the order rescinded.

Both in his military triumphs, secured by moving his armies with incredible speed from one end of the Empire to the other, and in his arrangements for its administration, Charles showed himself a really great organiser. The borders, or "marches", were entrusted to carefully chosen governors who have left their name in our language as marquesses (margrafen). He was kept in touch with their affairs by royal legates called *Missi Dominici*, and as his choice of men was good he was able to establish the uniformity he desired.

After he became emperor he regarded himself still more definitely as the champion of Christendom, and made his subjects swear a new oath of allegiance to him: the oath was to be taken by everyone over the age of twelve, who was to be reminded that he was thereby promising not only to be true to the emperor, but to live in obedience to God and His law: "the rules of the Church and the commands of the clergy became as binding as the laws of the State and the orders of the government" (Seignobos, *History of the French People*, p. 75). Any offence against the emperor was a sin against God's anointed: the Empire was becoming a theocracy.

We have said nothing of his relations with the emperors at Constantinople, who at times made very similar claims. There

\* There are some grounds for believing that a piece of stuff, bearing a Mahomedan inscription, found in St. Cuthbert's coffin, and now in Durham Cathedral library, was part of the official robes sent by Haroun al Raschid to Charlemagne in recognition of his possession.

his assumption of the title of Emperor was naturally resented; Irene was too feeble to take action, but her successors made several expeditions against Italy between 804 and 810. The net result of them was that Venice was retained by Constantinople, while the Franks got possession of Pola and other ports on the north-east coast of the Adriatic, which the rulers of Italy inevitably coveted. Before his death he had been recognised as emperor by his rival—a concession much resented by many at Constantinople.

Another war beginning to threaten his last years was with the Danes, who were naturally alarmed by the subjugation of their neighbours. It would not be worth mentioning except that it led to the Danish construction of a great earthwork at the narrowest part of the isthmus of Schleswig—the Dannewerk which was still playing a part in history when Germans and Danes went to war in 1863.

But it is not only on his achievements as a general or as an administrator that Charlemagne's claim to greatness rests: he was a great and intelligent patron of the arts, and in the palace which he built at Aachen he gathered round him a company of scholars from all Western Europe, Alcuin from York, Paul the Deacon from Italy, and wandering scholars from the monasteries of Ireland. He himself could speak Latin and understood Greek, and he was as anxious to preserve what remained of Greek and Latin culture as to cherish Christian theology and learning: he hoped to fight barbarism not only with the sword but by the schools which he founded, attaching them to cathedrals and monasteries. The schools of Aachen, Fulda, Paderborn and Hildesheim did much to keep the lamp of learning alight in the dark centuries which were to come.

Nor were the minor arts neglected. Besides the copiers of manuscripts—and, as we have seen, Charlemagne by no means shared the contempt or fear which Gregory the Great had shown for classical studies—we hear of workers in gold and ivory, of silks, fine linen and embroidery.

The court, as we see it, is a strange mixture of barbarism and culture, of hunting parties and swimming parties alternating with learned discussions on points of etymology or science—and all of it dominated by the tremendous figure of the emperor, as ready to design a great cathedral as to plan a campaign, to lead the hunt on horseback as to study rhetoric with Alcuin or grammar

with Peter of Pisa, or to invent German names for the twelve months of the year; sleeping with a slate under his pillow that he might be able to practise making letters in the middle of the night—at once the humble German prince who knew how much he had to learn, and the autocratic emperor who owed no allegiance save to God himself.

He is in very truth a tremendous figure, and many who have done less service to the Church have earned a place in its calendar of saints. His favourite reading was Augustine's *City of God*, and when he encouraged his friends to address him as King David, he showed in what light he regarded his high position: when he sang, as he delighted to do, to the harp, he may well have had the Jewish king in mind. It cannot be denied that he shared David's faults as well as his virtues, for he married and discarded wives without scruple,\* and at least on one occasion he showed a savagery of which David was guiltless, for in mere revenge he slaughtered 4,500 Saxon captives. It is a strange exception in a life conspicuous for a love of justice and, on the whole, of mercy.

He has been blamed, like Justinian, and with even more injustice, for the rapid collapse of the Empire which he founded. That collapse was due to two causes for one at least of which he was entirely guiltless, though he can be justly blamed for dividing his Empire like a family estate. The amazing good fortune, which had for at least four generations blessed the house of Pepin with worthy heirs, was now at last to fail it: there arose no descendant worthy to bear his name or to carry on his work; he might well have hoped for a kinder destiny. The other cause lay in the inevitable ambiguity of the relations of Emperor and Pope: it is as easy for us to see the dangers in the light of history as it was hard for him to guess what the future had in store. Had other emperors arisen like Charles, the course of European history would have been very different. As it is, we can only be grateful for what was achieved by the first and very nearly the only man who has, with all his faults, some real title to the name of a Holy Roman Emperor.

### *The Frankish Empire 814-43*

It was not long before it was revealed on what precarious foundations the Empire rested. The son of Charles, Lewis the

\* His dismissal of his first wife, a Lombard princess, was one of the reasons for the bitterness of feeling between him and the king, her father.

Pious, deserved that epithet and showed it both by instituting moral reforms at court and by decreeing monastic establishments exempt from any obligation to the Empire except "to pray for its welfare and that of the Emperor and his children".

Their prayers were needed, but it can hardly be said that they were heard. So far as imperial prerogatives were concerned, Lewis not only allowed a new Pope to be chosen without reference to him, but (like King Pepin) invited the Pope to recrown him at Rheims—thereby surrendering two positions which his father would have maintained.

His policy with regard to the Empire itself was even more disastrous. After a narrow escape from death in 817, he meditated retiring to a monastery, but contented himself with destroying the collection of old Frankish heroic poems which Charles had made, and taking steps to divide the Empire among his three sons. By the first partition, Lothair, the eldest, was to be co-Emperor and King of Italy, the second was to hold Aquitaine, and the third Bavaria. These arrangements led to domestic strife in Italy, and soon after, Lewis, whose wife had died, married again. His second wife bore him a son whose birth was to prove disastrous to the Empire: he was later to be known as Charles the Bald.

A second fit of self-abasement came on the emperor soon after, and he insisted on doing public penance at Albigny, and allowed the bishops present to scourge him for his sins. It was not by such piety, however genuine, that the Frankish Empire could be induced to respect its master. A civil war followed, and yet another; he was twice dethroned and twice restored; his fortunes, like his character, recalling those of our own Henry VI. Another partition was made, complicated now by the need to provide for the young Charles, and in 840 poor Lewis died while again engaged in a campaign against his son the King of Bavaria.

### *Partition of Verdun*

Lothair, the eldest son, already co-emperor, was his obvious successor, but his brothers disputed it and defeated him in battle. The result of their victory was the Partition of Verdun (843) which divided the Empire into three parts and suggested, at least, the division which persists to this day.

Lothair, as eldest son, took the middle strip which contained the capital cities of Aachen and Rome—that middle kingdom in which almost all the subsequent wars of Europe have taken place

it had no merits as a single domain, for its inhabitants were connected neither by blood, language nor history: and the Alps forbade its ever becoming a coherent realm. Austrasians, Burgundians and Lombards could never have been expected to unite in harmony. Lothair's name, or rather that of Lotharingia his kingdom, lives on in geography in the word Lorraine.

The kingdom allotted to the young Charles was formed by the addition of Aquitaine to the Western "Francia", or Frankish dominions in northern France, so that he ruled almost all modern France without Burgundy or Provence. Hitherto France had tended to be divided into north and south, the Franks mainly living north of the Loire: this new division obviously prepared the way for the France of history.

The third division we might be tempted to describe as Germany, but it was really the kingdom of the Eastern Franks (including Bavaria and Saxony), separated from that of the Western Franks by the middle kingdom of Lothair. The future history of Europe was to be largely concerned with the struggles of the East and West for the regions which lay between them.

The partition of Verdun is therefore a real landmark in European history. So far as the Papacy is concerned it will be seen that it had purchased Frankish protection at the expense of being involved in the domestic struggles of the Franks.

### *England to 843*

It is not, of course, till towards the end of our present period that England can claim to play an appreciable part in the affairs of Europe. Britain, which the classical poet described as "utterly divided from the whole world", was even in the sixth century so little regarded that a suggestion made, in the discussions between Belisarius and the Goths, of exchanging it for Sicily was regarded by both parties as a joke; it was not till the eighth century that scholars and missionaries from this island began to play an important part.

Caesar visited it, Claudius conquered it and Domitian confirmed his conquest. Rome held England and Wales, up to the great wall north of the Tyne, though her influence was much stronger in the south and east than in the north and west. But by 410 the Roman troops were withdrawn and the emperor (Honorius) released the island from its allegiance: it was left to face the barbarians alone. The barbarians in question were Anglo-

Saxons from the North Sea and the Baltic who in a series of invasions occupied most of Britain from the Forth to the borders of Cornwall, while the Jutes settled in Kent. They have been described as in part "bloody minded pirates", and in part "Pilgrim Fathers, come to settle on the land and till it themselves" (Trevelyan, *History of England*, p. 35). The fact that their occupation was in the main of those districts where Roman influence had been strongest explains why that influence is on the whole so slight, and how it happens that, except for their roads, the Romans have left little mark upon the island as a whole.\* In Gaul, for example, the Roman tradition was too strong to be overwhelmed, while in Britain it was not.

### *The Conversion of England*

For the better part of two centuries the island had been isolated from Europe, but when Gregory the Great sent Augustine to Kent in 596, England (as we must now call it) was admitted, or re-admitted, into European society. Augustine's mission, though fundamentally successful, was in two respects a failure: he did not achieve any union with the British Christians, who hated their conquerors too bitterly to be anxious for their conversion, and the attempts of his disciples to convert the North, after a promising beginning, ended in flight and failure in 634. The North was to be converted from a different angle.

The Irish Church, though it traced its origin to St. Patrick, a Gallo-Roman, had developed on lines different from those followed at Rome; its life centred round the monastery rather than the bishop, and it was from an Irish monastery, founded by St. Columba at Iona in 563, that there came the conversion of the North of England. St. Aidan and St. Oswald, King of Northumbria between 635 and 642, inaugurated what is perhaps the most glorious century in the history of the English Church.

We must not dwell on the beauty of the character of Aidan, the most lovable of English saints, but pass rather to the two ways in which England exerted an influence on Europe. Both have already been alluded to, when we have mentioned Boniface, the Apostle of Germany, and Alcuin the teacher of Charles the Great. Boniface is only the most famous of many missionaries who went from England to the heathens east of the Frankish realm, and

\* The pheasants which flew before the invaders from Roman villas are another permanent memorial of the Roman conquest.



Alcuin only the greatest representative of the school of York, which had rivals at Canterbury, Malmesbury and Jarrow. It was at Jarrow that there lived the greatest representatives of English learning of the day, Bede, 673-735, the father of English history, as learned as Alcuin and as attractive a character as Aidan himself.\* It was in these days too that English poetry first found a voice in Caedmon, the herdsman of Whitby.†

The name of Whitby reminds us of the conference of 664, at which, after a celebrated debate, the claims of Rome were held superior to those of Iona. It was probably the right decision, for Rome meant "civilisation" in a way which Iona could not rival; but it was in a sense the triumph of the statesman over the saint, and we should never forget that it was Iona which saved Christianity in the North, and gave the inspiration to which those great results were due. The first, and admirable, result of Whitby was the appointment of Theodore of Tarsus to Canterbury, "the first Archbishop whom all the English Church obeyed", and a considerable statesman. Henceforth for many centuries England was to be among the most dutiful of the children of Rome: we have already seen how Boniface did all he could to increase the papal authority.

But before the ninth century was over another barbarian invasion threatened to turn back the tide: the heathen Danes sacked the monasteries in hope of plunder, and for three-quarters of a century made life unsafe wherever they could penetrate up the rivers. (It is worth notice that London, like Paris, first won its fame by resisting Danish raids.) At the time when our period ends Alfred, who was destined to conquer and to convert them, was barely born, and with him a new chapter of English history was to begin.

\* The manuscripts and pictures which Benedict Biscop imported from France and Italy to Monkwearmouth and to Jarrow at the end of the seventh century, show how the culture of Europe was gaining ground.

† But Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch is certainly right to remind us that it was from the "Mediterranean springs" and not from Caedmon and Cynewulf that Chaucer "the Father of English Poetry" and his successors drew their inspiration. (*Cambridge Lectures*, p. 26.)

## Europe 843-1057

*European Unity (2)*

In so far as our central theme is the various attempts made to establish European unity, it may be convenient to give a very brief summary of those attempts for the next 500 years.

The unity effected by Charlemagne—apart from the fact that it was entirely personal and therefore transitory—was limited by the other fact that it left Eastern Europe out of account; this limitation applies to the whole period which follows (except for the momentary gleam of a possibility under Otto III, see p. 73). For the rest of Europe the only hope lay either in the harmonious co-operation of Pope and emperor, or in the emergence of a Pope or an emperor strong enough to dominate his colleague and give laws to the Christian world.

Harmonious co-operation it was perhaps too much to expect, and it was only realised in fact when some strong emperor like Otto was called in to depose an inadequate Pope and to substitute a strong man of his own choice. But a strong Pope was never likely long to accept subordination to an emperor, and, the more wisely the emperor exercised such powers as he had over the choice of a Pope, the more certain it was that his nominee would assert the dignity of his office, and in so doing come into conflict with imperial pretensions. V 5<sup>c</sup> N 00 ← D 0 6 8

In these 500 years we see first the reform of the Papacy by the Ottos (950-1002), but even then it was too late for any emperor to impose unity on Europe, and this was still more true in the days of Henry III, perhaps the most powerful of them all (1039-56), for national feeling was beginning to arise and to resent any central authority. 46 5621.

Such an authority could only be accepted if it were able to claim a direct divine commission. Hence came the not wholly unsuccessful attempt of the reformed Papacy to unite Europe in its obedience (1057-1305). But the extravagance of its claims led first to the bitter struggle with the Empire from which it emerged victorious indeed, but with a loss of moral prestige (1250), and to its own downfall half a century later at the hands of the rising

power of France (1305). Nationalism caused the Pope to be regarded rather as a foreign power than as the Father of all nations alike; and the conduct of the Popes often encouraged the idea. Henceforth it was to be left to the nations themselves to co-operate or to conflict as their own interests dictated: it was not till another five centuries had passed that there appeared the first faint glimmers of a consciousness that Europe, as such, might have a common interest and pursue a common policy.

### *Summary*

Let us attempt a brief summary of the events which this period was to cover, remembering always that at this time some of the most important events were the least dramatic—as for instance the foundation of the monastery of Cluny in Burgundy and the conversion of the Russians to the Greek Church; and that the most important of them all was the final breach between the Churches of Rome and Constantinople in 1054.

We left the Eastern Roman Empire just beginning to recover from the disastrous episode of Irene, but so weak as to be willing to recognise Charlemagne as a legitimate emperor. We are to witness two centuries of great progress with a wonderful development of learning and then, from a military point of view, “the most glorious and successful period of Byzantine history”. But by 1057, when the Macedonian dynasty ends, the shadow of the Seljuk Turks is beginning to fall on the East.

In the West, 843 had seen the end of the brief honeymoon of Church and State, and both emperors and Popes were to fall on evil days: the house of Otto brings a brief but glorious revival to the Empire at the end of the tenth century, and under Henry III, who became emperor in 1039 and died just when our period ends (1056), “the Empire attained the meridian of its power” (Bryce). Both the Ottos and the Henrys did something to redeem the Papacy from the complete discredit into which it had fallen, but it will be left for Gregory in our next period to revive its power.

In France, the royal house which we saw established in 843 grows weaker and weaker, and before the tenth century ends is succeeded by the house of Capet, which has by the end of our period done something to increase its strength. Both in France and later in Italy we begin to hear of the Normans who were vitally to affect both countries.

In England, we left the Danes on the offensive: Alfred is now

to defeat them, and to establish a more stable and a more Christian kingdom. By 1057 "the holy but imbecile" Edward the Confessor is on the throne and William the Norman bides his time across the Channel.

Our period will also see the rise and fall of the first Bulgarian Empire.

### *The Roman Empire in the East*

As this summary will have suggested, no apology is needed for devoting most of our attention during this period to Eastern affairs. During these years the Eastern Roman Empire was incomparably the richest, the most powerful and the most civilised state in Europe, and its history is still infinitely more coherent than that of the Empire in the West. It produced men remarkable in the arts of peace and in those of war, and, though their characters are sometimes questionable, their history and their achievements are full of interest. It is the more necessary to emphasise this because of the general conspiracy to neglect them \*—and this though Western History during these years contains hardly any names of interest save those of Alfred, Leo IX, Otto and Henry III. Nor did Constantinople fail to influence Europe: the conversion of the Slavs and the Russians to the Orthodox faith had effects which last to the present day.†

The Imperial throne, through almost the whole period (from 867 to 1057), was occupied by the Macedonian dynasty, though for considerable periods, while the emperors were minors, the real authority was exercised by regents, sometimes given the title of co-Emperor. There were many crimes and scandals in and about the palace, and many insurrections which we shall neglect: we shall rather concentrate on what the dynasty accomplished.

It was indeed in crime and scandal that the dynasty began. Basil the Macedonian, in charge of the stables of the Emperor Michael (nicknamed the Drunkard) caused his master to be murdered, and, as he had previously married his mistress at the Imperial request, it is very doubtful whether his successor had the

\* Professor Tout in his account of this period, *The Empire and the Papacy*, gives only a tenth of his space to Constantinople and its affairs.

† It is somewhat smug to say, as the *Cambridge Mediaeval History* does (IV, 83), that it was "discredited and degraded by palace intrigues which are barely conceivable to the Western mind". The Eastern mind (if such a thing existed) might find at least equal difficulty in conceiving the situation at Rome at the same period when a lady of more than doubtful character "made and unmade popes at her pleasure". (The phrase is that of Professor Tout.)

right to bear his name. But once on the throne Basil ruled with wisdom and skill: he codified the law with such success that his Basilikon (re-edited by his son) remained in force till the Empire fell. He was a great builder, erecting many new churches and restoring the old. Being a European, he was in sympathy with those who valued and venerated images.

His successor, Leo VI (the Wise), had a peaceful reign of twenty-six years (886-912). During all the Macedonian period the break-up of the Empire of Haroun al Raschid prevented the Saracens from being really formidable (though they had conquered Sicily in 878). Leo devoted his leisure to the writing of books, the most important of which is his *Manual of the Art of War*, which describes in detail the Byzantine army and its tactics. It is interesting that he recommends in dealing with Saracen or Slav the same policy of vigorous or offensive action, even against odds, which our greatest generals have practised with success in India. Against Franks or Lombards, says Leo, greater caution is desirable. The Byzantine army, we learn, was admirably equipped, organised and supplied; each regiment was provided with an elaborate military train, a small body of engineers and surgeons and ambulances, luxuries unknown in the West till the days of Gustavus Adolphus. Its care for the wounded, says a good judge, puts to shame that of any modern army till the later days of the nineteenth century; and certainly the Duke of Wellington might well have envied its organisation of transport and supply. But this was far from exhausting Leo's literary energies: he reorganised the framework of the Church, and his hand was felt in every branch of the civil administration.

His son, Constantine VII, Porphyrogenitus, succeeded him at the age of seven (in 912), but took little personal share in the government till 944: his tastes were those of his father and his works even more interesting; he wrote long treatises on the Themes (or divisions of the Empire), describing their boundaries, inhabitants, characteristics and resources; another on the Administration of the Empire, dealing with foreign policy; and (what perhaps was even dearer to his heart) a long work on Court Ceremonies, which he describes with the utmost elaboration. He also encouraged the literary work of others, appointing historians, philosophers and men of science to the universities, and encouraging education by every means in his power. He was equally ready to help other arts such as painting and music.

In domestic affairs he followed the policy of his predecessors, keeping a wary eye on the wealthy nobles who sought to acquire the lands of the poor, and he also worked for a simplification of the law: "thanks to him, numberless religious and secular buildings were erected, restored and embellished" (*C.M.H.*, p. 67). It may be doubted whether the history of any country can show two successive rulers who did so much by precept and by example to encourage their subjects to believe in the things of the mind. The reward of their unceasing labours in so good a cause is that their reigns are described by a distinguished historian as "restful but inglorious".

Those who believe that the only true "glory" is to be found on the battlefield, and that all purely civilian activity is "restful", will find plenty to satisfy them in the reign of Basil II. This is equally true, whether we look at the long years of his minority—for he came to the throne in 963 at the age of five—or at the forty-nine years of his own personal rule from 976 to 1025.

During the first period there were successively two regents or co-emperors, *Nicephorus Phocas*, a member of a noble Byzantine family, and his nephew John Tzimisces. Both were exceedingly competent generals. Nicephorus took advantage of the temporary weakness of the Saracens, which we have already mentioned, and inflicted some shattering defeats on them. In the previous reign he had recaptured Crete, a considerable and important enterprise: as co-emperor he completed the re-conquest of Cilicia and North Syria, taking such great cities as Aleppo and Antioch, while Damascus only bought its safety by a heavy tribute. Cyprus was also regained, and the Eastern Mediterranean was again a Byzantine lake.

*John Tzimisces* (like Basil I) began his career by a murder—that of his uncle—but (also like Basil) he atoned for his crime, so far as possible, by the use he made of his power. He administered the Empire well, but he is chiefly memorable for his defeat of the Russians in 970. The Russians, who lived by the waters of the Dnieper, played no part in European history till in 862 a Viking band from Sweden came into their land. Their chief Rurik (the ancestor of all the Tsars) conquered them and formed them first into a kingdom. True to Viking tradition, they followed the course of the rivers and made their way down the Dnieper to the Black Sea, and began to harry the Empire, much as their kinsmen the Danes were doing in the West.

In 970 they planned a large-scale attack, with some 60,000 men, armed with spears and axes, and wearing mail shirts and peaked helmets. John Tzimisces defeated them in two great battles, using his mailed horsemen and bowmen against their great square columns of phalanxes. It might truly be said that the tactics of Hastings were rehearsed in Bulgaria, and with the same result. The Russian king, though not slain like Harold, was forced to swear never to molest the Empire again. Six years later John Tzimisces died, and Basil, now of age, began his rule for himself.

Basil II, like our own Henry V, had had a stormy youth, but developed into a strong and ascetic warrior. The work to which he dedicated himself, and which he successfully accomplished, was the moving back of the Roman border as far as the Danube. This involved the destruction of the Bulgarian power, and he is known in history as *Bulgaroctonos*, the slayer of Bulgarians. It took him some twenty years of warfare which culminated in the great victory of 1014: he took 18,000 prisoners, blinded them all save one man in every hundred, left to guide the rest to Samuel, the Bulgarian king. The sight broke his heart and he died, while Basil offered up thanks to God for his victory in the Church of the Mother of God at Athens—a building which earlier ages had known as the Parthenon.

### *The Bulgarian Empire*

For many, perhaps for most, readers, this summary will suffice, but the short-lived Bulgarian Empire deserves somewhat fuller treatment. We have already met the Bulgars, an offshoot of the Huns, when they conquered and killed two Roman emperors at the beginning of the ninth century. Since then much had happened: they had developed into a strong state; they had accepted Christianity, in circumstances to be described later; they had, despite various peace treaties, waged many successful wars against Rome; they had, under their great King Boris, decided that their destiny lay rather south through the Balkans than westward up the Danube; they wished for an opening on to the Aegean Sea.

Symeon, son of Boris, aspired to sit on the throne of Constantinople, and the ambition was not as absurd as it sounds; but he learnt that its walls were impregnable and contented himself (in 925) with taking the title of Emperor (or Tsar) of the Romans

and Bulgars; his son married the grand-daughter of an emperor, who recognised him as Emperor of the Bulgars.\*

But the quest of glory had exhausted the Bulgarian strength: they had conquered the Serbs, but gained little except an increase of territory, and now they were harassed by Magyars from the North and later by Russians, who overran Bulgaria on their way to attack Constantinople. Internally they were distracted by the heresy of a priest named Bogomil, who taught that all matter was evil, and attracted a large following (it appears that the Albigenian heresy (see p. 135), owes its origin to him). The Bulgarian Tsar foolishly chose this moment for another quarrel with Constantinople and was forced to abdicate: it was his successor, Samuel, who met the vengeance of Basil, though he treated the country well after its conquest.

The Bulgarians had built up a nation of themselves and the Slavs at the very gates of Constantinople. They had given it a language and a literature, and a national Church which was to keep its spirit alive. Had it been possible for them to maintain peace with Constantinople, the Empire would have had a valuable buffer state in Europe and a useful ally in the dangerous days to come. But it was not to be, and both Bulgaria and Constantinople were to pay a heavy price in submitting to the domination of the Turks.†

The great Macedonian dynasty ended in 1057 in something like tragi-comedy, for it is impossible to take very seriously the two nieces of Basil, with whom the family ends, the one an austere virgin, refusing to marry even for her country's good, and the other a clever and ambitious lady, marrying husband after husband, and herself directing the affairs of the Empire. Between them they may be said to exhibit many of the qualities (though none of the great qualities) of our own Queen Elizabeth.

But the period, it must be allowed, had been a remarkable one, marked by progress in the arts of peace as well as in those of war: and if an obscure tribe, called the Seljuk Turks, was giving trouble on the frontiers of Armenia it cannot as yet have occurred to anyone to regard them as a serious menace.

Two subjects remain which call for separate treatment—the

\* The Emperor, or rather co-Emperor, in question, Romanus Lecapenus, had already given the imperial title to three of his own sons, so that it was not very difficult to give it also to a grandson-in-law, an important and independent monarch.

† This short summary is based on Mr. Steven Runciman's very interesting work, *A History of the First Bulgarian Empire*.



conversion of the Slavs, the Bulgars and the Russians—and the relations of the Empire with Western Europe. As will be seen, they are not entirely unconnected.

### *The Conversion of the Slavs*

The conversion of the Slavs was begun in 864 by two brothers, Cyril and Methodius, natives of Thessalonica, and thus familiar with the Slav language and customs. They went first to Moravia, translating the Gospel into a Moravian dialect, and giving the people a Slavonic liturgy: for missionary purposes Cyril invented an alphabet, the Cyrillic, which is in use in Slav countries to this day.

The conversion of Bulgaria was due to its great king, Boris (see p. 67). Having decided on the step, he had to choose whether he would accept missionaries from Rome or from Constantinople, and an unsuccessful war with the latter decided him in favour of the Greek Church. His main object in becoming Christian was to consolidate his people by giving them a faith which Bulgar and Slav could share.

In this "Auction of Souls", as it has been called, Boris knew clearly what he wanted—the maximum of dignity and independence for his national Patriarch: this he thought himself more likely to obtain from Constantinople, and as Rome wished Latin and not Slav to be the language of the Liturgy, these facts turned the scale.\*

### *The Breach with Rome*

During this period the long-standing jealousy between Rome and Constantinople (inevitable as soon as Constantine made the latter a Christian imperial city) came to a head. It would be tedious to recount the various occasions which caused this latent hostility to flare up: Constantinople always resented Roman pretensions: Rome retaliated by (justly) accusing the Patriarchs of being often dominated by the emperors. Disputes arose sometimes on doctrinal points,† sometimes on points of practice,

\* This dispute had a curious repercussion recently at Spalato, when a colossal statue by Mestrovic was erected in honour of Gregory of Nin, a Slav liturgiologist. This was resented by the Italians, and for diplomatic reasons the ceremony was not honoured by the presence of high Yugo Slav authorities.

† Constantinople criticised the Pope for adding the *Filioque* clause to the Nicene Creed, not primarily on doctrinal grounds but because it was done without the authority of a General Council.

sometimes for purely personal reasons, but the fundamental cause was always the same.

The final breach came in 1054, when Michael Cerularius, a learned, able and ambitious Patriarch, offended by some action of the Pope in South Italy (still nominally under the Patriarch's control), retaliated by closing all churches of the Latin rite in Constantinople, and denouncing various Latin doctrines and practices, such as the celibacy of the clergy. His action was popular in Constantinople, where (not without reason) a low opinion of the Papacy, as it had for some time been, was permanently held.

It was unfortunate for Michael—and in a sense for Christendom—that the Papacy was then held by Leo IX (see p. 74), a strong man, and the first of those reforming Popes who were entirely to alter the position of the Papacy in Europe. His response was to send a Cardinal, who excommunicated Michael in Santa Sophia, and relations between the two Churches came to an end. This was a disaster of the gravest nature for Europe, and could not have come at a more unfortunate moment, for Christendom was shortly to need all the unity and goodwill it could produce, and neither real unity nor sincere goodwill were ever to be found again.

### *Western Europe 843-1057*

This period, which contains what has been described as the "darkest hour" in the history of Western Europe (855-87), sees also "the second foundation of the Imperial throne in the West" (Bryce), and the beginnings of a national life for France, Germany, England and Spain—though not for the unfortunate Italy. It will be convenient first to deal briefly with the affairs of France, the first part of the Empire to achieve anything like national unity.

### *France 843-1057*

In its confused history there are three events of outstanding importance—the coming of the Vikings, the establishment of the House of Capet, and the beginning of that struggle for the inheritance of Lothair's "middle kingdom" which has lasted till the present day. On this last point nothing more need now be said, except that it was in 869, when Lothair's son died, that the competition for such cities as Aachen, Metz, Liège, Trier and Strasburg first began between France and "Germany".

The Vikings attacked France much as they attacked England,

making their way up the rivers and occupying land round their mouths. In 911 the matter was settled (as in England) by the grant of land on condition of the acceptance of baptism. So Rollo, the Northman, became Duke of Normandy and, as the other Vikings drifted to Normandy to join him, the French king had saved most of his kingdom by sacrificing a part of it.)

It was the coming of the Vikings which led in the end to the change of dynasty. Odo, Count of Paris, won his name by the glorious defence of that city against them in 886 and 887, and was recognised as king of the West Franks, the candidate of the Karolings (or descendants of Charlemagne), being still a child. When he grew up he claimed the kingdom, and for a century the kings of France came alternately from the two families—the Karolings ruling at Laon, a typical mediaeval fortress, and the descendant of Odo at Paris, typical of the modern capital.\* In 987 Hugh Capet, of Paris, was elected king, and established a dynasty which was (though not always in the direct line) to occupy the throne till the days of the French Revolution.† His accession marked no startling change, and it was not till the twelfth century that the family produced a king capable of making France a really powerful kingdom.

### *The Empire and the Papacy 843-1057*

In Lord Chesterfield's phrase, "much time would be ill-employed in a minute attention" to the names of the phantom emperors and discreditable Popes who occupy much of this period; we can only try to select those whose character and achievements call for special notice. By 890 the Empire of Charlemagne had been cut up into five states, not by a partition such as that of Verdun, but corresponding in some degree to real national differences—the kingdoms of France, Germany, upper Burgundy (round Lausanne and Geneva), lower Burgundy (also known as Arles or Provence) and Italy. The last was to perish soon before the claim of the revived emperor: the Burgundian kingdoms were to endure for several generations.

Germany (if the name may be used) we saw last in the hands of Lewis, Charlemagne's grandson, who lived till 876. His death landed his kingdom in anarchy, from which it was saved by the

\* On the towers of Laon Cathedral there are, or were, figures of the oxen which dragged up the stone for the building—a reminder that it was essentially a hill fortress.

† It was as "Louis Capet" that the king was then tried and executed.

election of a Saxon duke, Henry the Fowler, in 918, who has strong claims to be called the founder of the German State. Being a Saxon, he was not greatly concerned with the Carolingian tradition of Empire, and set himself as best he could to organise a German kingdom, though in his day it was little more than a federation of great duchies, the king being merely *primus inter pares*. He checked the inroads of Magyars and Danes, and established a great ring of "marks" to guard the frontier, a task to be completed by his greater son.

It was the mailed feudal horsemen whom the Margraf or the local Count could put into the field under the feudal system, who really saved Christendom from the barbarians, and for the first time provided an answer to the light cavalry of the Magyars or Saracens; and the feudal castles which began to arise all over Europe demanded a siege longer than either Magyar or Dane could afford to undertake; but such feudal forces and feudal castles involved the growth of a host of petty magnates who were to be a serious problem for the future.

His son Otto I (936-73) took a wider view of his position than his father and used different means to secure it. Henry declared himself unworthy to be anointed king; Otto's first step was to secure a coronation, and he relied much on the assistance of the Church, having no doubt of his divine mission. While developing the "marks" he used them also as missionary centres, making Hamburg, for instance, the centre of a mission to Scandinavia.

His power increased, especially after his great defeat of the Magyars in 955, but his great nobles resented his reliance on the Church, and not all the bishops sympathised with his efforts to reform it. These efforts were ultimately inspired by the great monastery of Cluny in Burgundy (founded in 910) which was destined to have an immense influence on the religious life of Europe: it aimed primarily at reforming the monasteries by inducing them all to live up to the strict Benedictine rule.

But it was useless to reform the monasteries if the Papacy was not also to be reformed, for it had sunk into complete degradation, thanks to "the succession of infamous Popes, raised by means still more infamous" (Bryce). The Papacy had become the plaything of Roman gangsters. Otto felt himself called to save Italy, little guessing the harm that he was to do to that unhappy land by linking it again with the domestic affairs of Germany and the rivalries of emperor and Pope.

He went to Rome, received the Imperial crown, deposed the Pope and had a successor appointed, securing from him an absolute veto upon papal elections. It seemed as if the Popes were destined to be as completely subordinate to an emperor as ever the Patriarchs of Constantinople had been, and, when Otto married his son and heir to the daughter of an Eastern Emperor, men might well have thought that Christendom would yet be united under the paternal government of two great Christian princes.

Such a dream might have visited the mind of Otto, or that of his grandson Otto III (son of the Greek Princess) who died, "the wonder of the world", when only twenty-two years old (1002), full of schemes to make Rome again the capital of the world, of an empire which should indeed be Holy as well as Roman. He set his tutor, Gerbert, the marvel of his age for piety and learning, on the Papal throne, and hoped with his aid to rule a Christian world.\* But, even more than the first foundation of the Holy Roman Empire, this re-foundation depended on the personality of the emperor. Otto left no heir, and the Germans, who had had less than no sympathy with his mystic visions, set about the task of building an empire which should be possibly holy, as Roman as circumstances might allow, but, above all things, German.

Their new ruler was his kinsman, Duke Henry, a Saxon, though Duke of Bavaria. He was a good friend to the Church, which gave him the (unofficial) title of saint—a title more officially given to his brother-in-law, the Magyar King of Hungary, St. Stephen—though some of the German bishops disliked his admiration for Cluny and secured a successor of more German tendencies. This emperor, Conrad, of the same family (1024-39), secured for the Empire the kingdom of Arles or Provence, and left to his son, Henry III, a kingdom consolidated and peaceful.

Under him, Germany dominated the Western world: Poland, Bohemia and Hungary were all made fiefs of the Empire: he reformed and controlled the Papacy, nominating one German after the other to the office: had he not died before he was forty, European history might have taken a different course, but he died in 1056, leaving a child, Henry IV, to meet the troubles which were to come.

\* The name he took, Sylvester, significantly recalls the Pope who co-operated with Constantine the Great.

It is now time to turn to examine papal affairs more closely. We are soon confronted with the obvious fact that every emperor who caused a "good" Pope to be appointed was thereby raising up a potential enemy to himself, for a "good" Pope, according to Cluniac ideas (see p. 94), was one who maintained the authority of the Church, and that authority could, in theory, admit no earthly superior or equal. "The Emperors were working the ruin of their power by their most disinterested acts" (Bryce, p. 146). Henry III, as we have seen, found it necessary to interfere (1046), and the most important of his appointments was that of his kinsman, Leo IX, of whom we have already heard. He concerned himself with the affairs of Southern Italy, then mainly occupied by the Lombards, Saracens and Greeks, but owing allegiance to Constantinople. He also was the first Pope who had to deal with the Normans, but their career in Italy, like the conflict of Empire and Papacy, belongs rather to our next period, and it will be convenient to postpone it for the moment.

### *England 843-1057*

We left England beginning to be distracted by Danish inroads. As time went on, the invaders increased in military skill, and it was not till Alfred built a fleet that he could meet them on equal terms. By the Treaty of Wedmore (878) he consented to give them North and Eastern England on condition of their accepting Christianity. (That "conversion" was more than nominal is suggested by the fact that the Danes provided three Archbishops of Canterbury within a century.)

Alfred claimed no higher title than "King of the West Saxons", but Wessex, which under his leadership had repelled the Danes, had succeeded to the predominance which Mercia had previously held, and the legal code which he drew up was intended to cover not only Wessex but Mercia and Kent as well.\* The Danish invasions had forced a new political unity on England.

Alfred, "the most effective ruler who had appeared in Western Europe since the death of Charlemagne" (Stenton, *ibid.*, p. 266), has some claims to be called the father of English prose literature, the founder of London, and the first begetter of the English navy.

\* The memory of the Mercian supremacy is recalled by Offa's Dyke—Offa being a king whom his contemporary Charlemagne treated with respect—and possibly by the word "penny", said to be derived from Penda, an earlier Mercian king, and the man with whom the continuous history of our currency begins. (Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 221.)

He died in 899, having done on a small scale much the same work as Charlemagne, and with more enduring results.

His son Edward, in the next quarter of a century, was able practically to reconquer the "Danelaw", the part of England ceded to the Danes, and to call himself, with some reason, "King of the English"; and after the great battle of Brunanburgh (937) Edgar (955-79) was able to deserve the title of the Peaceful. The Danes became good Englishmen and did not retain their separate identity as the Vikings long did in Normandy. Edgar made Dunstan Archbishop, and he, by a wise and temperate application of Cluniac principles, was able to bring about a great monastic revival in England. By the time of the Norman Conquest all the monasteries in the country, except those in the North, had conformed to the strict Benedictine rule.

But the Golden Age of Saxon Monarchs was soon to end. In the days of Ethelred the Unready (978-1016) the Vikings took to the warpath again: the feeble king tried to buy them off with the Danegeld (the first example of direct taxation in England, later to become a war tax for the defence of the realm). Assisted by treachery, the Danes were victorious, and for a quarter of a century England was ruled by Danish kings—for most of that time well-ruled by Canute (1017-35) who was also King of Denmark and Norway. Had he not died at the age of forty the history of England, and perhaps of Europe, might well have run on different lines, for he aimed at, and might have secured, a Nordic Empire astride the North Sea. But his successors were feeble, and in 1042 Edward the Confessor, of the Royal House of Wessex but son of a Norman princess, became king, and Scandinavian influence was replaced by Norman.\*

His language was French and his preference for foreign ecclesiastics marked. He was not the man to keep in order the great earls of Wessex, whose influence extended, through marriage, throughout the country.† Earl Godwin headed the English opposition to the policy of the Court, partly no doubt for selfish reasons. He was banished in 1051 but returned in triumph two years later, and till Edward's death Godwin's son Harold held

\* But the Danes left their mark on English life and not least on law, which is itself a Danish word. It is possible that we owe to them, if not our jury system, at least that passion for committees which is so universal a feature of our national life.

† Edward's establishment of the royal Palace in Westminster, near the great Abbey which he founded, was to prove of great importance: had the king lived in London itself, the independence of the city would have perished in Plantagenet days, with lamentable results for the national liberties.

nearly as much power as the king: he was named by him as his successor and chosen by the Witan, but his weak title invited challenge both from Scandinavia and from Normandy. The first of these almost simultaneous attacks he was to defeat at Stamford Bridge, the latter was to triumph over him at Hastings, and English history was to take a new colour..

### *Spain 843-1057*

A few words must be said of the beginnings of the Christian kingdom in Spain. Schisms among Mahommedans had resulted in the creation of a caliphate at Cordova, "which far surpassed any western court in splendour, luxury and culture": the Arabs produced poets, philosophers, metaphysicians and men of science learned in physics, astronomy and mathematics. Gibbon is justified in saying that in the ninth century they alone in the West practised with success "the arts which minister to the convenience and luxury of life", and the great mosque of Cordova testifies to their architectural skill. But by the end of the tenth century the caliphate had begun to decline and the Christian kingdoms of the North to take advantage of the fact. Sancho the Great of Navarre (970-1035) succeeded for a time in uniting all Christian Spain, and that expansion southwards had definitely begun which was to continue for four hundred years.

A prophet surveying Europe in the year 1057 would have seen no special grounds for alarm. True, in the East the Macedonian house had ended, but there was no reason to fear that another strong dynasty would not arise in time; in the West the heir of Germany was a child, but he would either grow up a strong man like his father or, if not, his place could be filled; there was a German Pope who could be trusted to work well with the German emperor: the political barometer, if not high, was at least steady.

Our observer would probably never have heard of the Seljuk Turks: he would take but a slight interest in the Norman leader who had been in Italy for a dozen years: he would not, unless he were a Roman, have heard of a papal sub-deacon called Hildebrand; but it was from these three quarters that the storm was to burst which makes the next century unique in its dramatic interest.



## CHAPTER VI

### Europe 1057-1204

#### *Summary*

These years see the downfall of the Eastern Roman Empire as a serious factor in European history. The year 1204 has been chosen as a limit because it was the infamous Fourth Crusade which gave the final blow to the power of Constantinople, already crippled by the Turks. This episode—too little remembered by the self-complacent West—was certainly the most, if not the only, decisive event in this century and a half, but the choice of this date involves breaking off in the middle of the story of the struggle of the Empire and the Papacy which occupies most of the period, and is, for the West, its most important episode.

But that is not so serious as it sounds, for the last and most dramatic act of that long-drawn tragedy does not open till the young Frederic II comes to the Imperial throne in 1212, and begins that long struggle with four Popes which caused him to be thrice excommunicated. The crusades, again, which fall within this period, nominally continued after 1204, but their spirit was exhausted before that date; 1204, once more, is the date when Chateau Gaillard fell, which really marked the end of English rule in Normandy, though not the end either of the failures of King John or of the successes of Philip Augustus of France.

Through the whole period run the activities of the Normans, that people of amazing ability and energy, whose effect was felt from one end of Europe to the other, sometimes valiant crusaders against the infidel, sometimes mere pirates, as ready to sack Rome or Constantinople as to conquer Sicily from the Saracens. To the Papacy they were by turns both friend and foe, though the enmity was more lasting than the friendship. It was their ultimate alliance with the Empire which, as we shall see, though at a later stage of the story, turns its struggles with the Popes into a life and death grapple which ended in the ruin of them both, for though both Papacy and Empire were, in a sense, to rise again, the mediaeval conception of their position was shattered for ever.

As this brief summary will have suggested, these 150 years are full of incident and deserve to be studied, both for their intrinsic

interest and for their influence on the years which were to come. For the last time we will begin our survey with Constantinople, which provides the stage on which Emperors and Popes, Turks and Crusaders, Normans and Venetians, were to play their allotted parts; we shall meet one or two heroes there, several swashbucklers, some scoundrels, and a large number of extremely selfish and dishonest persons in every rank of life. It could plausibly be maintained that the battles of Manzikert (1071) and Myriokephalon (1176), of which the average reader has never heard, were the most important single episodes in that century and a half.

### *The Roman Empire in the East 1057-1204*

As this is the last opportunity we shall have of visiting Constantinople in the days of its glory, and as the Byzantines are now to be brought into close contact with the Latin world, it is worth while to make some attempt to estimate their character, and it is the more necessary because they have been so consistently misjudged.

It is not so much that faults have been wrongly attributed to them; their defects were real and glaring: it is rather that eminent historians seem to forget that in that respect they had no monopoly. It is true, for example, that their punishments were often cruel—they slit the noses and blinded the eyes of criminals—but William the Conqueror (to take but one example) ordered that “whoever killed a hart or a hind should be blinded”, and his harrying of the North, which he gave over to devastation and massacre, was more brutal than any punishment inflicted by a Byzantine emperor.

Again, we are bidden to condemn its city mob as “the most violent in Europe” (Fisher, I, 219): it is perfectly true that, from the days of Justinian, Constantinople was a turbulent place, but contemporary Rome had little to learn from it in the arts of mob violence.

Another historian (*C.M.H.*, IV, 778) tells us with horror that at Constantinople “merit was of less use than intrigue”, that “there was visible an eager pursuit of selfish aims, and a manner of conducting life which left too much scope for skilful acuteness, for successful cunning and for cleverly calculated treachery”. Were “acuteness”, “cunning”, and “treachery”, unknown in the West? It would appear that this historian thinks so, for he adds

that "this explains why the supple and subtle Greeks, in spite of their real virtues, were always regarded with distrust by the blunt and straightforward Latins": it was not "blunt straightforwardness" which won Robert Guiscard his name of the Wily, nor was the Papal policy for some centuries deficient in subtlety, even if (in the teeth of all the evidence) we acquit the members of the Fourth Crusade, and in particular the Venetians, of "the eager pursuit of selfish aims".

This absurd verdict has been quoted as a warning against prejudice. The Byzantines had many faults: they had probably learnt from the East to be too tolerant of cruelty; they were volatile and fickle; their moral standard, if no lower, was not appreciably higher than that of their Western contemporaries; they hunted heresies and split hairs with an enthusiasm which the West has only occasionally shown. They were certainly clever, and cleverness is always suspect, but they had used their cleverness, in the words of a not too friendly critic, to make Constantinople "in the ninth and tenth centuries the undisputed queen of European culture" (Fisher, *ibid.*). He adds that "in the eleventh century, though the West was then fast drawing level, it could show a society easily superior to that of any Western city in art, learning and civilised habits". Such was the society which the West was now in the name of the Christian religion, to despoil and to destroy.

We left Constantinople in the hands of the aged Theodora (see p. 68) the last representative of the Macedonian line. The emperor whom she nominated was a failure, and the Cappadocian magnate, who ruled from 1059-67, thought of nothing but economy. Like other governments in similar positions, he chose the army as the best field in which to economise, and this at the very moment when the Empire was faced with the greatest military danger it had known for four centuries.

The Turks (kinsmen of the Huns, Magyars and Bulgarians) had overrun the Arab Empire, but after occupying Baghdad in 1055 accepted the creed of Islam, and their leader declared himself "defender of the faith and protector of the Caliph". Next year his successor, Alp Arslan, subdued the Armenians and Georgians, and, having thus taken the outposts, prepared for an attack on the Empire.

The Turk was—as he was for nine centuries to remain—a soldier and nothing more, caring nothing for statecraft, archi-

ecture, poetry, law or commerce: he was a very different enemy, and more formidable than the Arab had ever been.\* Constantinople awoke to its peril and chose a brilliant young general as emperor. He put every man he could find into the field, and fought for three years, not without success, in Asia Minor. But in 1071 he was utterly defeated in a great battle at Manzikert in Armenia. History is not kind to defeated generals, and has decided, in spite of his good record, to hold him responsible for the defeat, though it would seem that his heavy cavalry, manœuvring according to the tactics taught by Leo (see p. 65), were unprepared to deal with the methods of the Turkish horsebowman, and there was some talk of treachery.

In any case, poor Romanus IV, for that was his name, paid a heavy price in person: he was taken prisoner, and Alp Arslan set his foot on his captive's neck. He returned to Constantinople, to be dethroned and blinded and to die in prison. The Empire paid still more heavily, for Asia Minor was lost to it for ever.

After more troubles at Constantinople there arose a new dynasty, that of the Comneni, which held the throne for a century. Its founder, Alexius Comnenus (1081-1118), though a man of courage and ability, and a good soldier, had some of the vices which the world has come to regard as typically Greek. Though he was not cruel or vindictive—seven ex-emperors or usurpers lived unharmed under his regime in Constantinople—he was undoubtedly crafty and treacherous. He is largely responsible for the ill repute in which "Greek faith" came to be held, but he undeniably kept the Empire together at a moment of crisis, restored its finances, and guarded successfully all the territory which was still his to hold.†

It was not only with the Turks that Alexius had to contend. In 1081 Robert Guiscard (see p. 88), who had ten years before taken Bari, the last Byzantine possession in South Italy, launched an attack on him. It must be admitted that on this occasion the wary Norman was "honest and straightforward", but it was the honest straightforwardness of the pirate. Like that other Norman who, fifteen years before, had crossed a strait to win a kingdom,

\* A generation before the Turks had set up a Manchurian dynasty at Pekin, and Mahmud of Ghazni had established a Turkish State in Afghanistan and India.

† His reputation has suffered from the filial piety of his daughter Anna Comnena, who, in her life of him, does full and admiring justice to his powers of deception. Gibbon's portrait of the lady and her father (Ch. 48) is well worth reading. She attempted to assassinate her brother and to reign as empress herself.

he crossed the Strait of Otranto hoping to win an empire. Alexius met him in battle near Durazzo, and the result of Hastings was repeated. The Imperial Guard, composed of Russian, English and Danish mercenaries, charged with success, but fell into disorder, and when they rallied and beat off attack with their axes, the Norman archers shot them down. Alexius' craft enabled him to avoid another pitched battle, and slowly to wear down the Normans. Before that end was reached, Robert Guiscard had resigned the command to his son, Bohemund, whom we shall meet again. He himself died on the island of Cephalonia in 1085, and that particular danger was over.

His next difficulty was of his own seeking. Naturally impressed by the strength of Western troops, he decided to apply to the Pope, Urban II, for help against the Turks (1095), and this appeal was the origin of the crusades.

### *The Crusades*

Two events conspired to make the crusades a possibility: of these the first was the conversion of Hungary (between 1000 and 1050), which had removed a barrier to land communication between East and West along the Danube; the second, the destruction of the Saracen naval power in the Mediterranean: the Pisans and Genoese had retaken Corsica and Sardinia, the Normans (see p. 88) had freed Sicily, and the Venetians controlled the Adriatic. The physical difficulties had thus been gradually lessened, though, as we shall see, there were others, quite as serious, which remained.

That the application should have been made to the Pope was a tribute to the position which, thanks to Gregory VII (see p. 94), the Papacy had now achieved in Europe; there was, in truth, no other power to which Alexius could have appealed, for the Empire and France were both, as we shall see, distracted by internal troubles. Urban responded at once, and, encouraged by Peter the Hermit, a large though somewhat miscellaneous band took the Cross. These early crusaders, ill-organised and ill-led, mostly perished on the long land journey through Hungary and Greece, and achieved nothing.

The First Crusade, properly so-called, had no leaders of great European reputation: the emperor and the King of France were both excommunicate, the King of Spain had enough similar work to do at home, and William Rufus was not of the stuff of which

crusaders are made. Consequently the leadership fell into the hands of lesser nobles, of whom the most conspicuous were Raymond of Toulouse, Hugh of Blois (the king's brother), Stephen of Blois, Robert of Normandy; and from the Empire Godfrey of Lower Lorraine, generally known as Godfrey de Bouillon (a mistaken version of Boulogne). Finally, and not least important, there was Bohemund, the son of Robert Guiscard, whom we have just seen invading the Empire with his father.

The motive power behind the crusades was the desire to rescue the Holy Places of Palestine from the Turk and to secure free access to them for pilgrims: it is worth while to insist on this fact, in view of the common impression that a crusade implies a desire to convert others to Christianity by force: that is not, and has never been, a Christian idea, though in later days the name was wrongly so applied by Popes, and used to cover discreditable enterprises.\*

There were two great difficulties which were to hamper, and in the end to wreck, the crusading movement. In the first place, the Papacy could never forget that the Empire of Constantinople was technically an Empire of heretics; it was inevitable that it should desire to see it brought back into submission to Rome, and both sides must from the first have felt that this was a bar to complete harmony of action. Secondly—and for the moment a more important fact—some of those taking part in the crusade had selfish aims which conflicted with their holy mission as crusaders. It could hardly, for instance, be supposed that Bohemund the Norman had forgotten, or entirely renounced, the ambition of his father to make himself Emperor of Constantinople; nor was Alexius the man to expect it of him.

Misunderstandings were inevitable, and we, who have some experience of the difficulty of securing unity of command and maintaining harmony among allies, shall not be disposed to blame them too harshly, or, certainly, to put all the blame on one side. Alexius, not unreasonably, demanded that any of the old possessions of the Empire which might be recovered should be held as fiefs from the emperor, and promised full co-operation on that condition. The crusaders, though, not unreasonably, distrustful of Alexius, finally agreed to his terms and all took the oath of allegiance, though Pope Urban had encouraged them to

\* Gregory VII began this process when he promised absolution of sins for those who fought with him against Henry IV. (Prévité-Orton, p. 282.)

carve estates for themselves in the Holy Land. Neither side kept its contract—perhaps neither ever meant to: it is profitless to inquire which was the first to break it,\* but it is clear which was ultimately the gainer. The crusade resulted not in the re-establishment of Byzantine power in Syria but in the creation of new Latin states, of which the most important were the principalities of Edessa and Antioch (held by Bohemund) and the establishment of a kingdom in Jerusalem.† Alexius recovered for the Empire perhaps a third of Asia Minor.

The success of this crusade, the only one in which Constantinople was primarily concerned, was due to the dissensions of the Moslems: when these were healed, the Latin kingdoms collapsed. We shall have to speak elsewhere (see p. 84) of the disastrous Second Crusade, occasioned by the fall of Edessa in 1144 and the Third, similarly arising from the fall of Jerusalem in 1187. We must now return to the fortunes of Constantinople.

Alexius, after the First Crusade, had still some twenty years to reign. These years, though peaceful, were a time of commercial decline, for the Genoese and Venetians, having now acquired ports in Syria, ceased to use Constantinople as their main business centre; its trade is said to have fallen by a third, or even more, in the fifty years which followed the crusade. Alexius did not improve matters by the commercial privileges which he granted to some of the Italian republics, notably the Venetians—though it may be urged in his defence that he first did so to secure their help against the invasion of Robert Guiscard—or by his expedient of debasing the coinage. But it should be remembered to his credit that he restored peace and tranquility to the Empire in very difficult days, and that he created a strong and well-trained army of which his son was to make good use. On the whole we may regard him as a very capable, though not a very likeable, man, whose character has suffered in history from the mistaken enthusiasm of his daughter (see note, p. 80), and the unbridled malevolence of his crusading allies.

\* Though it should be remembered, as a recent historian has observed (*C.M.H.*, IV, 336 ff.), that Alexius remained on friendly terms with most of the crusaders; that Bohemund's refusal to restore Antioch was the source of all the difficulties; and that in spite of his breach of faith, a papal legate accompanied him when some years later he went through Italy and France preaching a crusade against the Emperor of Constantinople.

† Godfrey de Bouillon, refusing to wear a crown of gold where his Saviour had worn a crown of thorns, styled himself "Baron and Advocate of the Holy Sepulchre".

*John (1118-43) and Manuel (1143-80)*

Although, or rather because, their names are so unfamiliar to Western readers, it is worth while to linger for a little over the last great emperors of the Comnenian House. Of John (called the Good or alternatively the Handsome) comparatively little is known, but enough to cause a sober historian to describe him as "one of the best Emperors that ever reigned at Constantinople". Between them, the father and son—though, it must be admitted, at ruinous cost—maintained and increased the credit of Constantinople for sixty years, and shed a kind of sunset glow upon its story.

Manuel we know better, and both personally and politically he deserves attention. He was in many ways a typical knight errant, able to challenge any of the Latins in the tournament (a strange grandson for the crafty Alexius!), a good cavalry officer of fiery courage and tireless energy, an idol of his troops. He liked the Westerners, to the disapproval of his subjects (who said that "they spat better than they spake") and himself married two Latin princesses. He prided himself on his powers as a theologian, and dabbled in astrology; Gibbon, who acidly remarks that "the story of his exploits may induce a reasonable suspicion of the veracity of the Greeks", yet adds, "I must observe that in the long series of their annals, Manuel is the only prince who has been the subject of similar exaggeration".

His achievements in the field of politics deserve notice, though they proved ephemeral. He acquired Dalmatia, regained, for a time, much of southern Italy, and succeeded in securing the submission of Antioch, that recalcitrant principality. When he rode in triumph into Antioch "through streets adorned with carpets and hangings, to the sound of drums and trumpets and to the singing of triumphant hymns", and hoisted the Imperial banners on the city walls, he reached the zenith of his glory.

He came into close, and not always friendly, contact with the emperors and kings of the West, notably when the Second Crusade passed through Constantinople in 1147 on its way to its disastrous failure. Like his grandfather, he demanded and received promises of allegiance for any country they might regain: like him, he suffered from their depredations on their way through his territory, and from accusations of treachery, but it appears that if they had taken his advice as to the route they



should follow they might have avoided many of the misfortunes which befell them.

He supported the Pope (Alexander III) against the emperor (Barbarossa), and toyed with the idea of reuniting the whole Empire in his person and reconciling the Greek and Latin Churches; he had to face the permanent hostility of the Normans, who attacked him in the middle of his difficulties with the crusaders, and ultimately deprived him of his Italian gains. (Soon after his death they seized Salonica and held it for a time.)

But it was the Turks who were the permanent enemy and brought him to ruin in the end. He had been successful in almost every other field, had overrun Serbia, invaded Hungary, resisted the Normans, and driven the insatiable Venetians out of the Aegean. But in 1176 he suffered a crushing defeat at Myriokephalon in Phrygia, just a century after the similar disaster at Manzikert. It is by that defeat that he is remembered, if at all, and he has been bitterly blamed for it, though here again treachery may have played a part; but it is at least right to remember his achievements and to record that in his reign, as in that of his father, literature and the arts flourished under imperial patronage, and that the defence and adornment of his city were not neglected. This splendour may have been short-lived, but while it lasted it was real.

With him expired the good fortune of the Comnenian House: a degenerate member of it was not undeservedly put to death by the mob in 1185, and the incompetent family of the Angeli succeeded. The two brothers who reigned from 1185 to 1204 did nothing whatever to restore the finances, weakened by Manuel's constant campaigns, or the army, which had lost its best recruiting ground when the Turks conquered Asia Minor: they lost Cyprus to a rebel\*; they lost Bulgaria to a rising; they made an alliance with Saladin, and tried to obstruct the Third Crusade in 1187, but were forced by Barbarossa to make abject submission. Finally, their domestic quarrels gave the Fourth Crusade a pretext for its attack. If anything could have excused that monstrous outrage—which it cannot—it would have been the character of the ruling house. The Angeli make a lamentable end to the list of great houses which had ruled at Constantinople,

\* The rebel was in turn deposed by Richard Cocur de Lion, and Cyprus was given by him to Guy of Lusignan.

such as those of Heraclius, Leo the Isaurian, and Basil the Macedonian.

### *The Fourth Crusade*

This, "the most disgraceful act of mediaeval history", is too little remembered by those who love to contrast the subtle Greeks with the straightforward Latins, and for that reason it must be described in some detail.

The crusade, which began to muster in 1201, was originally designed for the invasion of Egypt, but this did not suit the Venetians, who had recently concluded a commercial treaty with that country, and, as they were to transport the expedition, were in a position to influence its movements. It seems likely that they always intended it to attack some Christian city, and it is far from improbable that Constantinople was in their mind from the first. In any case the town of Zara, an old enemy of Venice, was first attacked and plundered, an act which brought on the crusaders the denunciation of Pope Innocent III.

But this had no effect on the real leaders of the expedition, Dandolo the blind and aged Doge of Venice, and Boniface of Montferrat, both of whom began now seriously to consider the attack on Constantinople. They had a pretext ready to their hand, for an Emperor of the House of Angelus had been deposed, and his young son Alexius was with them, ready to promise anything for his father's restoration. He offered to acknowledge the supremacy of the Pope, to pay 200,000 silver marks, and to supply 10,000 men for an expedition to Palestine.

The crusaders were led by feudal barons, many of whom regarded the enterprise purely as a business matter, as the Venetians certainly did: the more pious among them calmed their consciences with the thought that the Greeks, after all, were heretics, and that it was a righteous act to reclaim them and to restore a deposed sovereign. The bargain was struck.

The incompetent emperor had no fleet to intercept them, and, though some fighting was necessary, the town was taken in July 1203, and Alexius and his father restored. It was not long before it became clear that the promises made could not be fulfilled, and the whole winter was spent in wrangling over the payment due. The crusaders, who had foolishly evacuated the city, had plenty of time in which to consider what a town it would have been to sack: "they had not dreamed that there was in all the world so

rich a city" with "rich palaces and great churches, of which there were so many that none might believe it if he had not seen it with his own eyes".

In February 1204 their pretext was given them. The people of the city rose against Alexius and his father, feeling that they and their religion had been betrayed, and chose for themselves another emperor who would defend their rights. The more scrupulous among the crusaders could again feel that they were called to assert the cause of a legitimate monarch, or rather to avenge his death.

They spent two months in preparation, and on April 8th, 1204, they attacked but were beaten off with loss. Some of them wished to abandon the enterprise, doubting whether their defeat was not a judgment on them for attacking fellow Christians, but Dandolo had no such scruples, and on April 13th the city was taken.

In the words of Pope Innocent III the conquerors "respected neither religion nor age nor sex . . . and dared to lay their hands on the wealth of the churches". Santa Sophia was looted and desecrated: a prostitute seated herself in the chair of the Patriarch; the whole city was given up to plunder. After three days of unrestrained violence, the leaders collected what they could find for public division, and though so much had already been stolen there was £800,000 in gold and silver to distribute: "the booty was so great that no man could give you a count thereof—gold and silver, plate and precious stones, samite and silks, and garments of fur, vair and silver gray and ermine, and all the riches that were found on earth".

Even worse than this robbery was the wanton destruction of works of art: treasures collected or created since the days of Constantine went into the melting pot; the altars and screens of the churches were scraped to the stone. Manuscripts were even more easily destroyed. "Not a single Greek manuscript is known to have been brought to Europe as a consequence of the Latin occupation of Constantinople" (Fisher, I, 269), for "the pilgrims", as Gibbon puts it, "were not solicitous to save or transport the volumes of an unknown tongue . . . and, without computing the extent of our loss, we may drop a tear over the libraries that have perished in the triple fire of Constantinople".

The Pope might derive some consolation from the apparent extirpation of the Greek heresy: though, as we have seen, he denounced the atrocities, he did not excommunicate their authors

as he did in the case of Zara. But the ultimate result was only to make the Greek opposition more bitter to everything that could be called Latin. We can understand how, more than two centuries later, a patriotic Greek nobleman could exclaim: "Better the turban of the Turk in Constantinople than the Papal tiara!" Of this great crime there were ultimately only two beneficiaries—the Venetians and the Turks.

### *Western Europe 1057-1204. The Normans*

Throughout this period the Normans play a leading part, in England, France and Southern Italy, and it will be convenient first to deal as briefly as may be with their achievements. The mere catalogue is sufficiently astonishing.

We left the Normans legally established in 912 in the land which bears their name: Rollo, their duke, accepted Christianity, and the company of Norwegians, Danes and Swedes who formed his subjects seem to have quickly settled down as Frenchmen—for the Normans were always adaptable—though preserving their national characteristics. The Dukes of Normandy had little love for their feudal sovereign and gave him trouble, but it was in the eleventh century that they began to affect Europe as a whole.

The conquest of England meant the establishment of a strong Norman kingdom, to develop into something almost imperial, for the so-called "Angevin Empire" of Henry II was fundamentally Norman: the "empire" lasted only till the days of John, but in England the great dynasty remained. We have already seen the similar designs of Robert Guiscard in the East, the ultimate fruit of which was the Norman principality of Antioch which endured, in one form or another, till 1259. We have now to consider what they did in Southern Italy.

It was in 1017 that a small band of them first appeared in a land ruled either by Lombard princes or (nominally at least) by Constantinople.\* At first they were ready to fight for any paymaster, but by 1030 had established a principality of their own. It was in 1046 that Robert Guiscard of the Hauteville family came to Italy and the real development began. By 1071 the whole

\* The story of their first appearance is worth recording. Some Norman adventurers in 1016 on their way back from the Holy Land looked in at the shrine of San Michele in Monte Gargano to pay their respects to a saint honoured in their own land. There they encountered a certain Lombard who suggested that they should return with some more of their kinsmen and help him in an insurrection against the Byzantine rulers in Southern Italy. They agreed and kept their promise: so began the momentous connection of the House of Hauteville with Italy.

of Southern Italy was in his hands, and we have seen his designs on Constantinople ten years later. Next year his brother Roger (the Great Count) took Palermo, and by 1091 had made himself Lord of Sicily, having conquered the Saracens who held it. His young son, Roger, by 1130 was recognised as King of the Two Sicilies, having succeeded to the duchy of his cousin on the mainland. King Roger died in 1154: his dynasty died out in the male line forty years later, but his daughter Constance, who had married the Emperor Henry VI, had left a son, Frederic, who was in due course to be "the wonder of the world".

The Norman kings of Sicily had to face a situation very different from that which confronted William the Conqueror in England: here was no uniformity of tradition, or of religion or of race; their rule was based on political and religious toleration, and was marked by a "quick assimilation of alien elements and a statesmanlike treatment of native customs and institutions" (Haskins, p. 225), with, at the head, a monarchy more absolute and Oriental than anywhere else in Western Europe. It is not for this reason that Roger has been said by the latest historian of the Normans to deserve the title of "the first modern king" (Haskins, p. 233), but because of his non-feudal policy, his far-sightedness and his diplomatic skill.

The result was a kingdom of cosmopolitan culture, praised by Arabic travellers, Byzantine poets and Latin scholars, and an architecture which, as seen at Monreale and Palermo, though in a totally different style, is not unworthy of comparison with the great buildings which we call by the Norman name. When it is remembered that "at most a few thousands would cover the entire Norman population of Italy and Sicily", and that at the very same time they were building, with even greater success, the Norman kingdom of England, we shall be lost in amazement at the astonishing vigour of a race which, wherever it went, left so enduring a mark. Their Southern kingdom, it is true, was to perish by violence in a century and a half, but the Sicilian Vespers of 1282 were to show how bitterly their subjects resented the rule of another, and their attachment to Roger's house was, later still, to add yet another nation (the Spaniards) to those who had claims on Italian soil. King Roger, sitting on his throne, clad in the purple and gold of the Greek Emperors or sumptuous vestments of red samite, embroidered with golden tigers and camels, wearing a crown bestowed by an Antipope but confirmed by a

Pope of unquestioned authority, issuing diplomas written impartially in Greek, Latin or Arabic, supported by his chancellor Robert of Selby and his chaplain Thomas Brown, with his harem well in the public knowledge if not in the public eye, yet exercising in Sicily the powers of an apostolic legate—Roger may not be a figure of importance to us to-day, but he was a very great and significant figure indeed in the twelfth century, and throws much light upon its character.

Europe 1057—1204 (*continued*)*The Papacy 1057—1204*

These years cover a most important epoch in the history of the Papacy—the epoch at which it rose to a dominant position in Europe: they embrace the pontificates of Gregory VII (Hildebrand) 1073–85, Urban II (1087–99) and Alexander III (1159–81) and see the beginning of the reign of Innocent III (1198–1216). It will be convenient, before we consider its rise to power and the struggle with the Empire that involved, to deal briefly with its relations with the Normans of whom we have just been speaking.

*The Papacy and the Normans*

Leo IX, after challenging them in battle and suffering a severe defeat in 1053, left the problem unsolved, but six years later one of his successors gave them formal investiture of their lands, and Robert Guiscard was able to call himself “by the grace of God and St. Peter, Duke of Apulia and Calabria and, with their help, hereafter of Sicily”. They were unruly vassals, and Gregory VII excommunicated them, but, needing Robert’s help in his struggle with the emperor, received him back into favour. The Normans, who came to Gregory’s rescue in 1084 when he was blockaded in the Castel Sant’ Angelo, saved him with the help of their Saracen troops—and in the process did more damage to the ancient monuments of Rome than had ever been done by the Vandals.

The later Popes could not but approve when Italy was saved from the Saracens, but King Roger was no more tractable than his uncle had been, and, taking advantage of disputed elections to the Papacy, was able to secure not only full recognition of his royal title, but some special ecclesiastical privileges. But the Sicilian Kingdom, and the Normans generally, were regarded by the Papacy (and not without reason) with considerable suspicion.

*The Empire and the Papacy 1057—1204*

The struggle, as has been said, was inevitable. The theory of the “two swords”, the one given by God to the Pope to control

the spiritual life of man, and the other to the emperor to direct his temporal affairs, was one of those magnificent ideals which appealed to the Middle Ages, but which they made very little attempt to carry out in practice. ("Resistance to God's Vicar was admitted to be a deadly sin, but it was one which nobody hesitated to commit" (Bryce, p. 134).) It was clearly only workable, except by compromise, if the spiritual and temporal affairs of man could be regarded as entirely separate spheres. This was obviously impossible, for emperors, kings and barons inevitably had souls, and Popes, bishops and abbots naturally, if not quite inevitably, became the owners of estates. The absurdity became manifest when, as sometimes happened, the emperor was of higher personal character than the Pope, or when, as also occasionally occurred, the Pope was a more powerful temporal ruler than the emperor.

But, apart from such extreme cases, friction could not but arise, and did arise whenever either party to the bargain stressed his own claims and the other was strong enough to resist them. We have seen how Otto, confronted with weak and even scandalous Popes, invaded the spiritual sphere, and claimed a decisive voice in the choice of the Pope. In the present period we are to see how the rise in the power of the Papacy, based on the elevation of character which the reforms of Cluny had inaugurated, led to its claims being stated in a way which no emperor could willingly accept.

From the point of view of theory, the Popes had one enormous advantage: no one, not even an emperor, could deny in those days that the soul of man was more important in the eyes of God than his temporal affairs. So long as the argument remained on that plane, the papal case was unanswerable, and it is difficult to exaggerate the debt which Europe owes to this assertion of the supremacy of the things of the spirit—even when the personal character of individual Popes might throw doubt on their claims to interpret it.

But the Popes, even the best of them, felt that respect for their claims could only be enforced by temporal means. It is easy to blame them, and throughout this period there were some, from Arnold of Brescia to Francis of Assisi, who maintained that the right course for Christians was to put all temporal and worldly concerns aside, and to rely solely on the sword of the spirit.\* On

\* One Pope, Pascal II, for a brief moment in 1111 seems to have accepted this principle, but hastily withdrew from it.



the other hand, the Popes were realists, dealing with the hard facts of a very partially converted world, and even the greatest of them, secure in the purity of their own motives, felt that the arm of the flesh must be called in to establish their position. It would be too much to say that from that moment the cause was lost—indeed, as has been said, they secured a respect for their claims and, in a sense, for those of God, which might in the conditions of the time have been otherwise unobtainable—but they had descended into the worldly arena and were, in little more than two centuries, to find their day of triumph followed by a day of disaster.

It is interesting to trace the stages of the progress along this road. For 300 years (see p. 49) the Popes had controlled an appreciable territory in Central and Northern Italy: in 1059 the Pope took a step forward when he gave to the Norman duke the "investiture" of his lands in the South, claiming thereby feudal lordship over them; at the end of that century it acquired by the donation of the Countess Matilda much land in Lombardy and Tuscany; soon after we find Alexander III claiming against Frederic Barbarossa that the Empire was practically in feudal dependence on the Papacy, and another Pope claims "to confer the imperial crown".\* Innocent III, though not claiming in so many words that the Empire was a papal fief, insisted that it was from the Pope that every emperor received his position. It was left for Gregory IX (1227-41), a little after our present period to declare that Italy had been "abandoned by Constantine to the Apostolic See", and that any rights given to the emperor were committed to him solely as the defender of the Church. From this it was but a step to the day when Pope Boniface VIII was to declare "I am Emperor; I am Pope".

It is not to be supposed that the emperor (or indeed any temporal potentate) would accept such pretensions without a struggle. The emperor had some strong cards to play: the papal theory was clearly contradicted by history: for past emperors had unquestionably dethroned and appointed Popes, and even the "donation of Constantine" (see p. 49), of which so much was made in an uncritical age, implied that the source of the Pope's temporal power lay in an emperor's gift. The emperors carried on the struggle with varying success, its amount determined by their own

\* The word used was "beneficium", and the Pope, Hadrian, was forced to declare in the end that he was not using it in any technical sense but only to mean a benefit. (Prévité-Orton, p. 234.)

personal character and ability, and by their inevitable pre-occupation with the affairs of Germany. The fact which turned the scales against them was that, while a strong emperor might be succeeded by an incompetent son, or by a mere child, the new Pope, chosen since 1059 by the College of Cardinals, was likely to be both anxious and competent to continue the policy of his predecessor. The mediaeval Empire fell with the death of Frederic II in 1250: his mocking spirit would have laughed to think that in his fall it would bring the mediaeval Papacy to ruin.

This brief and imperfect survey has carried us beyond our present period: we have now to consider the great Popes whose life it covers, and, first, the greatest of them all, Gregory VII.

Gregory VII (1073-85) based his programme on three principles—the freedom of the Church from temporal control: Rome its head and centre: the superiority of everything spiritual to everything temporal. These ideas were not original, being the essential doctrines taught at Cluny, but he was the man whose single-minded courage carried the programme to a large measure of success.

The two practical reforms on which he set his heart were the enforcement of the celibacy of the clergy, first proclaimed by Leo IX, and the abolition of the practice of "lay investiture", by which bishops before consecration had to do homage for their temporal possessions, and were then invested (by the lay power) with the sacred symbols of a crozier and a ring. These two reforms were closely connected, for a married clergy would inevitably tend to become a national clergy, concerned with the interests of its own country, and a bishop to regard the power to which he did allegiance as that to which his duty was owed. Both these results were repugnant to Gregory's mind.

In his first object he was successful, though not without a struggle, for his views were not acceptable in North Italy, nor did they find a welcome in England. In the Greek Church the ordinance of celibacy was, and still is, regarded as one of the Latin heresies against which protest must be made.

The pursuit of his other object involved him in a controversy which lasted till his death, and was only settled some fifty years later by a compromise which seems obviously sensible, that if the bishop did homage for his estates the lay power should not claim to present him with the crozier and the ring: this compromise

would not have satisfied Gregory, who disapproved of clerical homage to a layman in any shape or form.

He was fortunate in his chief antagonist, for Henry IV, who had succeeded to the Empire as a child, was much handicapped by revolts and disorder in Germany. When Gregory, in 1075, declared any emperor, king, duke or count excommunicate who "presumed to give investiture of any ecclesiastical dignity", Henry retaliated in kind, protesting against the insult to "a consecrated king who cannot be judged but by God Himself", denouncing the Pope as a heretic, and declaring him deposed. The Pope naturally answered by excommunicating him and setting up a rival emperor—"the first exercise of his theocratic prerogative and a precedent of incalculable importance" (Prévité-Orton, p. 211): in 1077 came the famous scene at Canossa, when Henry made abject and complete submission: the Papacy seemed to have triumphed.

But that was not the end: Gregory's harshness defeated its own object, and Henry, after his rival emperor had been killed in battle, came down into Italy, where he had Lombard support, and, with the help of an anti-Pope, blockaded Gregory in the Castel Sant' Angelo. It has already been told how he was rescued by the Normans (see p. 91), and it was among them that he died in 1085, dying, as he claimed, in exile because he had loved righteousness and hated iniquity.

If his career appears thus to end in failure, he remains one of the great names in history, for he had set up a standard under which the papal cause was for two centuries to fight, and had proclaimed principles for which with different weapons it is fighting still. It might seem that his ambitions were thwarted, like those of Robert Guiscard, his strange ally, who died in the same year: both of them left their dreams unfulfilled, though both had seen some measure of success, but the Italian saw farther (and aimed higher) than the Norman, the ecclesiastic than the pirate, and his visions were to have the wider measure of fulfilment.

There was a brief interval before the curtain rose on the second act in the drama. In that interval the "investiture" question had been settled by the Concordat of Worms in 1122 (see p. 102), and the Papacy had added to its prestige under Urban II, whose part in the First Crusade we have already mentioned. The Empire had been weakened by the coming to an end of the male imperial line, and two weak emperors had followed.

But by the middle of the century a change had come. The Popes had lost control of Rome, and there was a movement, headed by Arnold of Brescia, which denounced their temporal power. They were constrained to invoke the emperor's help, and, unluckily for them, the Empire was now in the hands of Frederic of Hohenstaufen (1152-90), famous under the name Barbarossa. His family, descended in the female line from Henry IV, had held the Empire since 1134, but he was to launch it on a century of glory.

### *The Papacy and Frederic Barbarossa*

Frederic's first antagonist was Hadrian IV, the only English Pope, who was by no means disposed to abate the papal claims: though it was only with Frederic's help that he was able to capture and execute the rebellious Arnold, he forced the emperor to hold his stirrup, and claimed, as we have seen, to bestow the imperial crown as a *beneficium* (see p. 93 n.).

When Hadrian died (1159), Frederic made full use of his opportunities, and supported a rival Pope against Alexander III, the elected candidate. He not only intended to dominate the Church in Germany (which, of course, supported his candidate), but also to make himself effectively king in Italy. This involved subduing the strong and independent cities of Lombardy, who naturally became the allies of Alexander.\* With their help, and with the aid of the weapon of excommunication, Alexander ultimately triumphed (in 1177), for the Germans were not enthusiastic about an Italian campaign.† Frederic had to abandon his attempt to dominate the Papacy and to rule Italy, but he had revived the Empire, and by one of his last acts, the marriage of his son and heir, Henry VI, to the heiress of the Norman kingdom of Sicily, he prepared the way for a future struggle in which the Pope would have to fight on two fronts, against the Normans in the South as well as against the Germans in the North.

In his contest with the Papacy Frederic was unlucky, for he was defeated not by the Pope but by the Lombard republics, with whom we naturally sympathise in their struggle for independence; but two things should be remembered to his credit, that he was attempting to assert rights hitherto unquestioned, and that after

\* The great fortress, Alessandria, founded in 1168, recalls his name and his struggle.

† The Pope had also the support of the King of Sicily, for the Normans feared the emperor's designs on Southern Italy.

his defeat he loyally and honourably accepted the new situation; the last years of his life enhanced his reputation.

He set out in command of the Third Crusade to recover Jerusalem, successfully asserting himself as the rightful leader of the West in such an enterprise, and lost his life, drowned in a river in Asia Minor. It has been truly said of him by one historian that though "he never rises above the received policy and morality of his own day, he carries out that policy and morality in its best and most honourable form" (Freeman, *Historical Essays*, I, p. 25), and by another that he "is the noblest type of mediaeval character in many of its shadows, in all its lights" (Bryce, p. 179).

The same writer rises to an eloquence unusual with him when he describes the legend which has gathered round the place of his burial.\* "There, far up among its limestone crags, in a spot scarcely accessible to human foot, the peasants of the valley point out to the traveller the black mouth of a cavern, and tell him that within Barbarossa lies amid his knights in an enchanted sleep, waiting the hour when the ravens shall cease to hover round the peak and the pear-trees blossom in the valley, to descend with his crusaders to bring back to Germany the golden age of peace and unity."

When it is remembered that the peaks in question are those of Berchtesgaden, it will be agreed that the Muse of History has an irony of her own.

The third and final act of the drama does not begin till Barbarossa's grandson, Frederic II, was elected Emperor in 1212, which falls beyond our present period, but the interval was by no means devoid of incident. On the side of the Empire it covers the reign of Henry VI, who inherited none of his father's good qualities, except his ability and his enthusiasm for the Empire. His large schemes, which included one for making the Empire hereditary in his family, were cut short by his early death at thirty-two, leaving the inheritance to a child of three years old (1197).

The Papacy, on the other hand, after a series of unimportant Popes, passed in the next year (1198) into the hands of Innocent III, the true successor of Gregory VII, the most powerful, if not the greatest, of the Popes. He would in any case have pushed the papal claims to the utmost, and fate was almost unnecessarily

\* Modern historians tend to connect the legend with Frederic II, but I am content (if error it be) to err with Bryce.

kind to him when it presented him with an Empire weakened by a disputed election, and left his great enemy, the Hohenstaufen family, represented only by a child. As his most important activities belong to his later years—he held the Papacy till 1216—we will reserve consideration of them for our next period.

### *Germany 1057-1204*

It has been necessary to deal at length with the struggles of the Empire and Papacy in this period because their repercussions inevitably affected the whole of Europe: from no quarter, for example, did there come more bitter denunciations of Barbarossa than from that staunch champion of all ecclesiastical claims, Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury. The affairs of Germany, on the other hand, have a purely local interest and can be more briefly dealt with.

It will have been obvious that the preoccupation of the greatest emperors with Italian affairs must have had a very prejudicial effect on their management of their own kingdom: from this point of view it would seem that the legacy of Charlemagne, or rather that of the Ottos, was an unmixed evil. As a German king, Barbarossa, for instance, might have accomplished very great things, though whether the creation of a strong and united German kingdom in the twelfth century would have been a blessing to Europe in the end is a problem which defies solution. As it was, this unwillingness, or inability, to concentrate on German affairs caused Germany, broadly speaking, to remain a federation rather than a compact State. The great Dukes of Saxony and Bavaria were, for a long time nearly as powerful as their sovereign, and while he was often out of the country they had the great advantage of being permanently on the spot.

(Barbarossa, it is true, after long struggles, broke the power of Henry the Lion, Duke of Saxony and Bavaria, and partitioned his duchies, but this still left power divided among numerous princes who, though not individually so formidable, were equally an obstacle to the creation of a strong central power, and when he favoured the imperial Free Towns he was only adding to the enemies of centralisation. If Henry VI had succeeded in his plan of making the Empire hereditary no doubt the cause of German unity would have gained, but this broke down because of the jealousy with which the princes guarded their privileges as Electors.

At the same time it must be remembered that the position of the German king was far stronger than that of the King of France: his dukes might be rebellious, but they were far more orderly and obedient than a Duke of Normandy or a Count of Flanders. No German duke ever disputed that royal rights existed, though he might rebel against any monarch who tried to exercise them; in France their very existence was the point at issue. The German kings moved throughout their vast realm preserving such order as they could, at a time when no French king went farther from his capital than Orleans or Compiègne. The possibility of a strong kingdom existed, and that it was not realised was the fault of the imperial idea: it may be doubted whether Italy or Germany was the greater sufferer from the existence of that not inglorious dream.)

### *France 1057-1204*

As has already been suggested, the course of monarchy in France was very different from that which it took in Germany; in fact, it may be said to have developed on almost opposite lines. In Germany it was necessary for vast and vague ideas to be discarded before a national monarchy could grow; in France the development was from within outwards, and we see a small compact domain expand into a large kingdom. In France there existed from the first, on a small scale, that close feudal organisation which the German kings failed to create: in the one the great figures come early; in the other we have some centuries to wait.

The early kings of the House of Capet (which obtained the throne in 987) were not of heroic stature: the great nobles were practically independent, and were not royal officials even in theory; the result was that the kings, outside their own little realm of Paris, were almost helpless. Their one great piece of good fortune was that father was succeeded by son in uninterrupted succession, and the extreme weakness of the eleventh century began to pass away.

The First Crusade (1095) for the first time revealed French unity: it is not without significance that the crusaders were known in the East as "Franks". The Second Crusade was also inspired by a Frenchman, St. Bernard, and the king served in it (without success) for two years. It was in France, too, that the reform of the Church began (at Cluny) and in France that the

policy it urged was most completely carried out. It was in this century that, by the assistance given to Alexander against Barbarossa, the head of the royal house began to qualify for the title of the Most Christian King.

Territorially the gains were, in our period, comparatively small, and the Norman kings of England held far more land in France than its own kings possessed: when the divorced wife of Louis VII, Eleanor of Aquitaine, married Henry II it might well seem that French monarchy was to be reduced to the shadow of a shade. But the tide was about to turn: in 1165 Louis' second wife bore him a son, who, under the name of Philip Augustus, was to prove the second and greater founder of the French monarchy. Though he succeeded in 1180 as a boy, his greatest and most spectacular success was to come in the next century, and it will be more convenient to reserve its treatment for a later page.

### *England 1057-1204: William the Conqueror*

(In England, thanks to its insular position and to the genius of its rulers, a strong central government developed more rapidly and more completely. In this case it is possible to assume a general knowledge of the facts, and to concentrate rather on the leading characters and their reaction to the problems of their day. We shall see a Norman king dealing with the same question which another Norman king was to face in Sicily, and answering it in a different way; we shall see how he and his successors dealt with the problems of the relations between Church and State; we shall see the making of England.)

William's legal claims to the throne (though blessed by the Pope) were negligible; all we can say is that the attempt to establish them shows some respect for international law, and helps to remove him from the ranks of the pirates. It was as a conqueror that he ruled, and it is by his rule that he must be judged: he has no reason to fear the verdict. He established the unity of the country on a feudal basis, and was able, while doing so, to avoid the chief dangers of feudalism. Having been himself a rebellious feudal duke, he had no intention of tolerating rebellious feudal dukes in England; he broke up the great earldoms, and left no subject strong enough to rebel, except possibly those who held the borders against the Welsh and the Scots.\* Though individual barons held

\* It is interesting that there is only one Norman Baron, Montgomery, who has given his name to a county in England and Wales.



much land, their possessions were widely scattered. By the great "Oath of Salisbury", administered near the end of his reign (1086), every free tenant swore allegiance to the king, so that a rebel baron had but a doubtful claim to the allegiance of his own vassals\*—and the great Domesday Book had told the king exactly who the "free tenants" were. Like Augustus or like Henry VIII, William established a despotism under the forms of law.†

Historians differ, and will probably always differ, as to the amount of continuity in English life before and after the Conquest. But, however much or however little continuity there may have been, two things are certain. In the first place, to almost every Englishman, and especially in the upper classes, the Conquest must have seemed at the moment an unqualified disaster; but, in the second, even those who suffered most must have been aware of the new spirit which was to put an end to the troubled insecurity of the old days.

"The Normans who entered into the English inheritance were a harsh and violent race. They were the closest of all Western peoples to the barbarian strain in the continental order. They had produced little in art or learning, and nothing in literature, that could be set beside the work of Englishmen. But, politically they were the masters of their world." (Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 678.)

But, masterly as were his dealings with his Norman followers, his treatment of the conquered English shows him equally great. He ruled them as a harsh master. There was a strain of cruelty in him (see p. 78), and their losses and sufferings were very great, but, their subjection once accomplished, he treated all his subjects alike, distinguishing them not as Norman or English but as loyal or disloyal. (Thus he was able to do what Roger of Sicily could not accomplish, and to make his country a nation: the growth of what we call the English language is an evidence of the measure of his success. "Shires" gave way to "counties", but their chief authority is a "sheriff" and not a "count"; if the "Witan"

\* The "oath" was perhaps a temporary expedient, but it established a precedent.

† Bishop Stubbs gives it as his opinion that the plan of the Conqueror was simply to dovetail a feudal superstructure with the fundamental framework of the Anglo-Saxon polity, and that, coming with a band of feudal nobles to a free people he hoped that "his nobles might continue to be feudal and his people to be free". But this view is not nowadays without its critics (*Introduction to Rolls Series*, p. 121.)

It is perhaps safer to say that "out of the marriage of old Saxon institutions and laws with Norman the laws and liberties of England were evolved". (Rowse, *Spirit of English History*, p. 31.)

becomes a "Parliament", we have a "King" and not a "Roi". The Norman castles, originally of timber, rising on a mound (the Tower of London alone was of masonry from the first), kept the king's peace, and, painful as the process must inevitably have been, England began to grow into a nation. Its steady constitutional progress is due to the fact that William ruled by law and not by force alone.\*)

It remains to consider his relations with the Church. He had, as we have said, asked for and obtained the blessing of Gregory VII, but, when Gregory demanded homage in return, William's answer was prompt and clear: "Fealty I have refused to offer, nor will I, for I neither promised it, nor do I find that my predecessors did it to your predecessors", and Gregory wisely withdrew his claim. These two facts illustrate William's attitude: he was ready and willing to carry out the Cluniac reforms, and did so with the help of his great Archbishop Lanfranc; the inevitable struggle between Church and State was postponed while Popes were reasonable, kings honest and archbishops wise: a time was soon to come when these conditions were not fulfilled.

There are sides of William's character which we cannot but deplore, but it is undoubtedly a true verdict to say "that the history of England for the last 800 years has been what it has been has largely come of the personal character of a single man—and that that man was William, surnamed at different stages of his life and memory, the Bastard, the Conqueror, and the Great." (Freeman, *William the Conqueror*, p. 3.)

When William Rufus was king and Anselm archbishop, the "investiture" problem (see p. 94) became acute: Anselm was a stout defender of the rights of the Church, and, if he seems to us somewhat too ready to appeal to Rome, we must remember that it must have seemed intolerable that a man like Rufus should seem to confer any spiritual office. When Henry I succeeded (1100), this particular argument lost its force, but the controversy continued, and we may feel some pride that the sensible solution afterwards adopted in the Concordat of Worms (see p. 95) had been reached in England five years before.

Henry I (1100-35) re-annexed Normandy to the English Kingdom, and gave the country more than thirty years of good govern-

\* Kipling, in *Puck of Pook's Hill*, gives a vivid picture of the amalgamation of the two peoples—as he also does of the days of the Roman occupation: his historical imagination deserves more honour than it has received.

ment, improving the administration of justice and of the royal revenue. More important still, he did much to reconcile the English to their new royal house. But he left no son; the disaster of the White Ship robbed him of his heir and England of a king, and led to nineteen years of anarchy.

It was the task of Henry II (1154-89) to restore order and to raise the country to a great place in Europe. From his mother and father he inherited England, Normandy, Maine, Anjou and Touraine, and when he married the divorced wife of King Louis he acquired the Duchy of Aquitaine and Poitou; when he had conquered Ireland he reigned not only over the British Isles but over the greater part of France. It was, in fact, an obvious danger that the identity of England would be lost in a vague and somewhat heterogeneous Empire. From this danger we were to be preserved by the criminal imbecility of his son John, just after our present period closes.

Space forbids us to describe in detail the methods by which he successfully accomplished his great task: we will content ourselves by quoting the description given by two great historians of his personality and of his work.

"A hardheaded, industrious, cautious, subtle, restless man: fixed in purpose, versatile in expedients; wonderfully rapid in execution; great in organising without being in himself methodical; one who will always try to bind others, whilst leaving himself free; who never prefers good faith to policy nor appearances to realities; who trusts rather to time and circumstances than to the goodwill of others; by inclination parsimonious and retiring, but on occasion lavish and magnificent; liberal in almsgiving, splendid in building, but not giving alms without an ulterior object, nor spending money on buildings except when he can get his money's worth. As with treasures, so with men, he was neither extravagant nor sparing: rather economical than humane; pitiful after the slaughter of battle, but not chary of human life where it could be spent with effect. . . . He had little regard for more than the merest forms of religion . . . during the most solemn part of the service he was whispering to his courtiers, or scribbling or looking at pictures." (Stubbs, *ibid.*, p. 104.)

Such was the man. Here is the verdict from another author on what this "able, plausible, astute, cautious, unprincipled man of business" did for England. "Of all the monarchs who have worn

the island crown, few have done such great and lasting work as Henry Plantagenet, Count of Anjou. He found England exhausted by nearly twenty years of anarchy, with every cog in the Norman machine of state either broken or rusty with disuse, the people sick indeed of feudal misrule, but liable at any moment to slip back into it for want of means to preserve order. He left England with a judicial and administrative system, and a habit of obedience to government which prevented the recurrence of anarchy, in spite of the long absences of King Richard and the malignant follies of King John. After the death of the First Henry, the outcome of good government was anarchy; after the death of the Second Henry, the outcome of bad government was constitutional reform, and the difference is the measure of the work of the Great Angevin." (Trevelyan, *History of England*, p. 140 f.)

Room must be found for a brief account of Henry's most famous domestic quarrel, that with Archbishop Becket, both for its dramatic interest and because it shows how great was the power of the Church, even when it was defending a bad cause against a very powerful king.

The quarrel arose about Church courts: William the Conqueror had divided the spiritual from the secular courts and given them full authority over spiritual affairs: Henry proposed (and Becket at first agreed to the proposal) that clerics or "clerks"—a term which included anyone who served the Church in any capacity whatever—should, if suspected of felony, be accused first in the lay court, handed over to a Church court for trial, and, if found guilty, be degraded from their office and returned to the lay court for sentence and punishment. This sensible compromise Becket in the end rejected: he appealed to Pope Alexander III, who was too much occupied in his contest with Barbarossa to give him much help. After six years of struggle the archbishop returned to England and proceeded to excommunicate some of those who had opposed him. A rash exclamation of Henry's led to his murder. This so shocked the public conscience that Henry was forced to abandon his proposals and to submit to a degrading penance, being publicly flogged before the martyr's tomb.

The martyred Becket had won a great victory, but at a ruinous cost. "Benefit of clergy" was to remain for more than three centuries "one of the worst evils of the later Middle Ages", and to play no small part in preparing the lay mind of England to welcome the Reformation. But for the moment the triumph was

complete, and prepared the way for the humiliation of John before the Pope and the crippling tribute exacted by Rome in Henry III's day. Henry II succeeded, however, in securing that cases about appointments to livings should be settled in lay courts, and thus avoiding the innumerable appeals to Rome. As it was, the Pope secured the patronage of many livings and introduced many foreigners, many of whom never visited their parishes. It was not the least of Henry's services to England that, thanks to him, its Church was able to preserve its national character.

We might take leave of this very remarkable man with some words in which Bishop Stubbs sums up his character. "In the character of Henry II are found all the characteristics of the Plantagenet race. Not the greatest, nor the wisest, nor the worst, nor the most unfortunate, he still unites all those qualities in their greatest relative proportions. Not so impetuous as Richard, or Edward III, or Henry V; not so wise as Edward I; not so luxurious as John or Edward IV; not so false as Henry III, nor so greedy as Henry IV, not so cruel as the princes of the House of York; he was still eminently wise and brave, eminently cruel, lascivious, greedy, and false, and eminently unfortunate also, if the ruin of all the aims of his sagacious plans, the disappointment of his affections, and the sense of having lost his soul for nothing, can be counted misfortune." (*Ibid.*, p. 92.)

But in the case of a man to whom England owes so much, it is legitimate to end with a story which strikes a pleasanter note, and also introduces us to a great bishop of his day, St. Hugh of Lincoln. Hugh had excommunicated a royal forester for interference with the liberties of the Lincoln clergy and was angrily summoned to the royal presence. Henry, sitting under the trees with his court, received him in dead silence, being too angry to speak. At last, looking up, he asked for needle and thread and began to sew up a torn bandage on his finger. The bishop watched him for a while and then quietly said: "You remind me of your cousins of Falaise". The extravagant impertinence of the reference to the peasant girl who gave birth to William the Conqueror did not escape King Henry. He rolled on the ground, roaring with laughter: the quarrel was made up, and the bishop administered his diocese with no further interference from the king.

Richard I (1089-99) was seldom in England, and his crusading exploits do not concern us here, though the country had to pay heavily to ransom him from prison: his regent, Hubert Walter,

governed England well, and did something to initiate that characteristically English practice by which the gentry, though amateurs, are called upon to administer justice in their own districts.

John, a traitor both to his father and his brother (1199-1216) at once embarked on that career, so shameful to him and so fortunate to us, which was to lose us our foreign dominion and secure our domestic liberty. By the time our period closes, he had only succeeded in losing Château Gaillard, the impregnable fortress which Richard had built on the Seine. We shall return to his iniquities later.

### *Spain 1057-1204*

During this century and a half the Spanish peninsula is concerned entirely with its own affairs. The progress of the Christian states against the Moors—which more and more takes the character of a crusade—continues, though with occasional reverses, notably those inflicted when the Moors summon Berbers from the Sahara to their aid. The war fluctuates, and at one moment in 1086 Spanish Christianity is only saved by the dissensions of Islam; Alfonso VI of Castile and his great subject the Cid were the Christian heroes at the close of the eleventh century.

In the twelfth century the most important events were the rise of Aragon under its great king Alfonso I, and the establishment of the Kingdom of Portugal when Lisbon was taken from the Moors; but the Christians suffered a serious defeat in 1185, and for the rest of the century quarrels between the four kingdoms of Leon, Castile, Navarre and Aragon prevented further progress. Here, as throughout Europe, the influence of Innocent III was soon to be felt, and in Spain it was entirely for good.

### *The Effect of the Crusades*

It may be said with some confidence, first, that it was in this period that for the first (and possibly the last) time Europe became conscious of a real unity; secondly, that this unity, such as it was, was the work of the Christian Church; and thirdly, that the crusades, which first revealed this unity, were also one of the chief instruments in destroying it. These propositions must be considered separately, though obviously they are closely connected.

The crusades in their early days were a clear revelation that

Europe could be stirred by one emotion and could at least in some measure act as a whole. The motives of individual crusaders were infinitely various, and in some no doubt the desire for adventure or for mere gain played a large part, but every Christian, however imperfect, was to some degree stirred by indignation that the Holy Places of Christendom were in the hands of the infidel\* and that access to them was denied to the pilgrim. The motive power was indisputably religious.

### *St. Bernard of Clairvaux*

The person who most clearly embodies this religious unity was unmistakably St. Bernard of Clairvaux, who held in the twelfth century a position which seems to us amazing. The influence of this abbot—for he held no higher rank—was felt from one end of Europe to the other—"counsellor and admonisher of kings, trainer and maker of Popes, healer of schisms, condemner of heresies, author of a new crusade . . . the leading spirit of his age, the loveliest flower which mediaeval Monasticism could show". (Trench, *Mediaeval Church History*, p. 110.) To us his supremacy is at first hard to account for: we perhaps think of him as the stern prosecutor of Abelard (and, indeed, speculative theology was his weakest point) or as the organiser of the disastrous Second Crusade—"Bernardus non vidit omnia", said the mediaeval proverb. But it must have been a wonderful personal attraction, based on a very deep and real religious fervour, which caused him to be welcomed through France, the Rhineland and Italy with an enthusiasm which no Pope or emperor could command, which sent princes on a crusade, and secured the election of a Pope simply because he was the friend of Bernard. In his complete self-renunciation, his singleness of purpose and his zeal for righteousness, he represents the triumph of the monastic spirit, and is a greater figure even than the great Popes whom that spirit inspired. We have seen how it was the monastery of Cluny (founded in 910) which kindled the reforming spirit, and we must briefly trace the process which led from Cluny to Clairvaux.

Cluny, which reached the height of its fame by the middle of the eleventh century, stood for a strict observance of the Benedictine rule, but it did not encourage extreme forms of asceticism. This meant that those who desired a more rigorous discipline—

\* The word "miscreant", which dates from the crusades, originally meant simply "unbeliever".

as, for instance, Bruno, the founder of the Carthusian Order—broke away, especially when Cluny, now rich and powerful, began to spend money on fine churches and cloisters with a wealth of sculptural ornament.

The Cistercian Order, founded in 1098, was the most important of these offshoots, and a few years later an Englishman, Stephen Harding, gave it its constitution. Bernard joined the new Order in 1113, and became Abbot of Clairvaux, a new house, in 1115. Its principles were that there must be no superfluous splendour of furniture or ritual—no gold or silver ornaments, no elaborate vestments, no stained-glass windows, no stone towers; its abbeys were to be built in remote sites (Rievaulx, for example, was chosen as a place “of horror and desolation”, *horroris et vastae solitudinis*).

Its growth was almost incredibly rapid: it reached Italy in 1120, Germany in 1123, England in 1128; before St. Bernard's death (1153) there were 343 monasteries under its rule, at least fifty of them in England—the white Cistercian robe was known throughout Europe. The laymen attached to the monasteries, who took the vows but were not allowed to learn to read or write, worked as labourers with great success, and in Yorkshire, to take but one instance, taught much, as pioneers in sheep and cattle farming and the cultivation of the soil. They could not foresee the day when they would be remembered chiefly for the simple dignity and beauty of their architecture.

The monastic ideal is open to criticism, but even its severest critics cannot deny that it did for Europe what could hardly have been accomplished in any other way. The monasteries kept the fire of learning alight, by teaching and by the copying of books: they taught the dignity of manual labour; they preached, and often practised, the responsibility of landowners to care for the poor, and, above all, they were a constant reminder, in an age which took its lessons through the eye, that the things of God are of first-rate importance. Without them Europe could not have maintained its Christianity.

It was as the head of the most influential Order of monks that St. Bernard exercised his power, though it was felt by other Orders too: the Knights Templars prospered largely through his blessing. He and King Roger are the two most remarkable and characteristic figures of the twelfth century; it is interesting, though not altogether surprising, that King Roger was the only prince in Europe who was proof against the power of St. Bernard's



personality. It was not till the next century that Christianity was to find, in St. Francis, a representative with equal power over the hearts of men.

As to the general effect of the crusades upon Europe, opinions differ. There are some who trace to them the development of European commerce, or the intellectual movement called the "Thirteenth Century Renaissance", or, like Gibbon, hold that they struck a deadly blow at feudalism, destroying "the tall and barren trees of the forest" and giving "air and scope to the vegetation of the smaller and nutritive plants of the soil"—in other words, encouraging the growth of town life. Others hold that these results, though helped by the crusades, would have come about had they never taken place.

But it is generally agreed that they accentuated the sense of nationality, and that most crusaders returned with a stronger sense of the merits of their own particular country. It was not only that the Latins disliked the Greeks—that they had always done—but that all came heartily to dislike those of their fellow crusaders who came from countries other than their own. The Germans disliked the French; the French and English shared heartily in the animosity of their respective kings (Philip Augustus and Richard): it was not without significance that the "Teutonic Knights",\* founded in 1190, took a national name unlike those of the Hospitallers and Templars.

On the Papacy the crusades had a twofold effect. For the time they greatly and rightly enhanced its prestige, but they helped it down the path of secularisation. It was an easy step to proclaim a crusade against Christian adversaries, and it was a step which was soon taken; and the use of "indulgences" as a financial expedient grew naturally out of the idea (first mooted in 1195 by the Pope in a letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury) that "those who send of their goods in aid of the Holy Land shall receive pardon of their sins". Again, the crusading device of the "Saladin Tithe", at first employed by the Kings of England and France, set a precedent which the Popes were not slow to follow with results which we shall see. Dante had some reason for calling Plutus, the god of wealth, the arch enemy, *il gran nemico*.

We have spoken at length of the crusades in this place because

\* It was these knights whose exploits a century and a half later cut off Poland from access to the sea, with results which we have reason to know. Unlike the earlier crusaders (see p. 82) they *did* seek either to exterminate or to convert.

by the end of the twelfth century their inspiration had died out, only to revive in such hearts as that of St. Louis of France. Many verdicts have been passed upon them, from the romantic praises of sentimental novelists to the cynical estimate of Lord Chesterfield, "the most immoral and wicked scheme that was ever contrived by knaves and executed by madmen and fools". In sober truth, like so much of mediaeval history, they present a bewildering combination of what is splendid with what is base, of heroism and greed, of magnificent ideas perverted to sordid ends; but they wrote a page of history which no student of human nature can afford to neglect, and only a Chesterfield can despise.

## CHAPTER VIII

### The Thirteenth Century

#### *Summary*

This century is so crowded with great events that it will be convenient to begin with a short summary, to chart the road which we shall have to travel. By 1261 the shortlived Latin Empire of Constantinople had perished, and there is again a "Roman" emperor for the last two centuries of its history.

The Papacy, in 1205, was just beginning that marvellous career which was to make it, for a brief period, unquestionably the strongest force in Europe. A century later it had been exiled to Avignon, where it was to remain for seventy years, in practical subjection to the French Crown.

The Empire, when our period begins, was weakened by a contest between two rival claimants, but there was still the possibility—and one soon to be realised—that in strong hands it might again become the greatest secular power, and a very dangerous rival to the Popes. When it ends, the days of its greatness are finally over, and the holder of the imperial title is no more than the president of an unruly collection of German princes.

We left France, in 1205, just beginning, under Philip Augustus, to become a centralised power; in the course of this century it becomes the strongest state in Europe, its power established by three kings who were strong, and its credit raised by the fact that one of them was a saint.

England, when the thirteenth century began, ruled over most of France; when it ended, it had lost practically all its continental possessions, but had gained what may be called a constitution: it had suffered much from two bad kings, but under Edward I had won back its self-respect.

In 1205 Sicily was nominally ruled by the ten-year-old Frederic, son of Henry VI, whose mother was a Norman princess. After a brief period of glory, and a long subjection to the French, it had passed at the end of the century to a Spanish prince from Aragon who had some Norman blood in his veins—and Spain itself, now almost free of the Moors, was divided between the three growing powers of Castile, Aragon and Portugal.

The century is rich in great personalities. Innocent III and Frederic II are tremendous figures: in Italy St. Francis succeeds in a real sense to the influence exercised by St. Bernard, while in France St. Louis is perhaps the only king whose saintliness the whole world allows: Edward I and Philip Augustus have each their own greatness; Gregory IX, Innocent IV and Boniface VIII, whatever we may think of their characters, are at least dramatic figures of high significance. Nor can we forget that it was in the year 1300 that Dante placed the opening scene of the greatest of Christian poems.

### *Eastern Europe 1204-1311*

Before we contemplate the last act in the great struggle between the Empire and the Papacy we may glance by way of a "curtain raiser" at the tragi-comedy played in Eastern Europe. The tragic part of it is performed at Constantinople, where the crime of 1204 brought no gain to any one except to the chief criminals, the Venetians. The Latin Empire lasted nominally till 1261, when the city was captured by a *coup de main* by Michael Palaeologus, the Greek Emperor of Nicaea. Both before and after that event the century was one of constant misery and danger and of commercial decline. On one side the Empire was menaced by the Bulgarians and the Serbians, who succeeded each other as the strongest power in the Balkans, and on the other by the Turks. To meet the latter the emperor in 1303 hired Spanish mercenaries who had been fighting in Sicily; under the name of "The Grand Company" they did their work, but quarrelled with their paymaster, and, after ravaging the imperial territory in Europe, passed on into Greece, where we shall meet them again.

For it is Greece, where the two strongest Latin powers were the Duchy of Athens, with its capital of Thebes, and the Principality of Achaia in the Peloponnese, which supplies the lighter, and fantastic, side of the play. The very names suggest an atmosphere of fantasy: Athens has become Satines, Lacedaemon La Cremonie, and Euboea Negropont\*; the castles may be called Beauvoir or Monemvasia: in such a world it is nor surprising to find that the main industry of Athens is the making of soap,

\* The names were reached by the same process which has turned *ἑς τὴν πόλιν* into Istanbul: Satines represents *ἑς τὰς Ἀθήνας*, and Negropont *ἑς τὸν Ἐυρώπον* Monemvasia, so called because of the "single entrance" (*μόνη Ἐμβασίς*) which made it almost impregnable, became Malvasia, and so gave its name to our "malmsey wine".

or to read of a splendid tournament held at the Isthmus of Corinth.

Little as we now remember it, Lacedaemon was considered the best school of chivalry in the East, and the prince's court, with an Englishman as his bishop, was "more brilliant than that of a great king";\* but he had not so fine a palace as the Duke of Athens, who, when he stayed there, lived in the Propylaea on the Acropolis, with the temple of Nike Apteros as a private chapel; on great occasions he would worship in the Parthenon, the Church of Our Lady of Athens, as Basil II had done on a famous occasion (see p. 67). It was still undamaged, though the Frankish crusaders, who had little respect for the Orthodox Church, had plundered its treasures and dispersed its library. The days were to come, some centuries later, when a Florentine Duke of Athens was to bequeath his stud farm for its maintenance.

It would be tedious to describe the wars of these Frankish princes with the Byzantine Emperor (who regained much of the Peloponnese), with the Greek Despot of Epirus, and with one another, reviving the ancient rivalry of Athens and Sparta; or to trace the process by which they became involved in the Sicilian struggles of the Angevins and the Spaniards. But we must say a word of the great battle of the Kephissos (Chaeronea in Boeotia), where in 1311, the French Duchy of Athens fell at a single blow.

The "Grand Company" of Catalans, as we have told, had made their plundering way into Greece: Walter de Brienne, Duke of Athens, led forth 700 Frankish knights and thousands of Greek infantry to meet them; the knights, like the English at Bannockburn, plunged unawares into marshy ground: all were slain but two; and "not so much as an army chaplain was left to tell the tale". The Catalans had lost their leaders before the battle, and were fain to offer the command to one of the two Frankish survivors. And so, for nearly a century, Athens passed into the hands of a band of rough Spanish mercenaries whom their leader (a renegade Templar) had led East some eight years before to fight against the Turks. It is one of the strangest episodes in all its strange history, and has an interest much greater than its historical importance.

\*"In the 13th century Greece was to the younger sons of French noble houses what the British colonies were in the 19th to impecunious but energetic Englishmen." (Miller, *The Latins in the Levant*, p. 66.)

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### *Eastern Europe 1204-1311*

Before we contemplate the last act in the great struggle between the Empire and the Papacy we may glance by way of a "curtain raiser" at the tragi-comedy played in Eastern Europe. The tragic part of it is performed at Constantinople, where the crime of 1204 brought no gain to any one except to the chief criminals, the Venetians. The Latin Empire lasted nominally till 1261, when the city was captured by a *coup de main* by Michael Palaeologus, the Greek Emperor of Nicaea. Both before and after that event the century was one of constant misery and danger and of commercial decline. On one side the Empire was menaced by the Bulgarians and the Serbians, who succeeded each other as the strongest power in the Balkans, and on the other by the Turks. To meet the latter the emperor in 1303 hired Spanish mercenaries who had been fighting in Sicily; under the name of "The Grand Company" they did their work, but quarrelled with their paymaster, and, after ravaging the imperial territory in Europe, passed on into Greece, where we shall meet them again.

For it is Greece, where the two strongest Latin powers were the Duchy of Athens, with its capital of Thebes, and the Principality of Achaia in the Peloponnese, which supplies the lighter, and fantastic, side of the play. The very names suggest an atmosphere of fantasy: Athens has become Satines, Lacedaemon La Cremonie, and Euboea Negropont\*; the castles may be called Beauvoir or Monemvasia: in such a world it is not surprising to find that the main industry of Athens is the making of soap.

\* The names were reached by the same process which has turned *ἡ πόλις* into Istanbul: Satines represents *ἡ τὰς Ἀθῆνας*, and Negropont *ἡ τὴν Ἐπίδαυρον* Monemvasia, so called because of the "single entrance" (*μόνη Ἐμβόαις*) which made it almost impregnable, became Malvasia, and so gave its name to our "malvasy wine".

or to read of a splendid tournament held at the Isthmus of Corinth.

Little as we now remember it, Lacedaemon was considered the best school of chivalry in the East, and the prince's court, with an Englishman as his bishop, was "more brilliant than that of a great king";\* but he had not so fine a palace as the Duke of Athens, who, when he stayed there, lived in the Propylaea on the Acropolis, with the temple of Nike Apteros as a private chapel; on great occasions he would worship in the Parthenon, the Church of Our Lady of Athens, as Basil II had done on a famous occasion (see p. 67). It was still undamaged, though the Frankish crusaders, who had little respect for the Orthodox Church, had plundered its treasures and dispersed its library. The days were to come, some centuries later, when a Florentine Duke of Athens was to bequeath his stud farm for its maintenance.

It would be tedious to describe the wars of these Frankish princes with the Byzantine Emperor (who regained much of the Peloponnese), with the Greek Despot of Epirus, and with one another, reviving the ancient rivalry of Athens and Sparta; or to trace the process by which they became involved in the Sicilian struggles of the Angevins and the Spaniards. But we must say a word of the great battle of the Kephissos (Chaeronea in Boeotia), where in 1311, the French Duchy of Athens fell at a single blow.

The "Grand Company" of Catalans, as we have told, had made their plundering way into Greece: Walter de Brienne, Duke of Athens, led forth 700 Frankish knights and thousands of Greek infantry to meet them; the knights, like the English at Bannockburn, plunged unawares into marshy ground: all were slain but two; and "not so much as an army chaplain was left to tell the tale". The Catalans had lost their leaders before the battle, and were fain to offer the command to one of the two Frankish survivors. And so, for nearly a century, Athens passed into the hands of a band of rough Spanish mercenaries whom their leader (a renegade Templar) had led East some eight years before to fight against the Turks. It is one of the strangest episodes in all its strange history, and has an interest much greater than its historical importance.

\*"In the 13th century Greece was to the younger sons of French noble houses what the British colonies were in the 19th to impecunious but energetic Englishmen." (Miller, *The Latins in the Levant*, p. 66.)

*The Empire and the Papacy 1204-1305*

The struggle between the Empire and the Papacy, inevitable from the first, reached its climax in the thirteenth century, when both sides, though not quite simultaneously, claimed absolute supremacy for themselves. It was rendered more bitter by the fact that, as long as the House of Hohenstaufen ruled both in Germany and in the Kingdom of Sicily, the Popes were threatened with war on two fronts: that is why they set themselves, at all costs, to destroy that family root and branch. They were successful, but their success involved the bringing into Italian politics of two other foreign powers, France and Spain. It was only for little more than a generation (1266-1303) that the Papacy enjoyed its triumph, and its fall was as ruinous as that of its rival. Among the disastrous results of the war between the Empire and the Papacy was that it left neither of them free to cope with the Tartar invasion of 1240, which left a lamentable mark on Russia.

At the beginning of our period the Hohenstaufen question was in abeyance, for Frederic was a child of ten, and there seemed no danger of his uniting the two crowns of the Empire and Sicily. Though he had been elected "King of the Romans" at the age of two, no one took his claims to the Empire seriously, and Innocent III was ready and willing to act as guardian of his rights in Sicily, which he did with great success. The time had not yet come when he was to be involved in the imperial struggle. Before we consider that, it will be well to look more closely at the character and achievements of Innocent III, one of the greatest of the Popes.

*Innocent III (1198-1216)*

Of the greatness of his achievements there can be no doubt: he believed, as he said, that "the Lord bequeathed to Peter not merely the Government of the Universal Church, but the whole secular estate", and he acted successfully on that belief. He was called in to arbitrate on a disputed election to the Empire; he compelled the great King of France, Philip Augustus, to take back a discarded wife; he forced the criminal King John to acknowledge himself the Pope's vassal; he claimed the power to absolve him from his oath to observe Magna Carta; he reduced the Kingdoms of Aragon and Portugal to fiefs of the Holy See. He held over Europe the same moral authority as St. Bernard, backed by all the papal power.



In the strictly religious sphere he accomplished much: he saw, in name at least, the Constantinople Church submit to Rome; he utterly wiped out the Albigensian heresy in Southern France; he gave invaluable encouragement to the Christian crusaders in Spain; he recognised, though with some hesitation, the mission of St. Francis and, with less hesitation, that of St. Dominic. As an organiser of the religious influence of the Church he had no rival.

The Lateran Council of 1215 revealed the greatness of his triumph: he stands forth as a legislator for Europe, as the one man who can tax the clergy by his own decree, and as the champion of their control over the laity. But such clerical despotism has its dangers, and it was fortunate for the Church that at this moment the movement of the Friars (see p. 133) arose to give a new and more inspiring interpretation of Christian duty.

But these successes were bought at a great price. He could not have approved the methods by which the submission of Constantinople was secured, and, by extending the crusading idea to cover warfare against Christian heretics in France, he set a most dangerous precedent, to be followed with even less excuse by his successors. "If the clergy did not live like temporal men", said the great Lord Halifax, "all the Power of Princes could not bring them under the temporal jurisdiction", and it is unquestionable that, for all the greatness of his ideals, Innocent did at times behave as a "temporal man".

It is hardly an exaggeration to say that in his time Europe, for the only time in history, was practically directed by one supreme authority, and that an authority which based its claim on the supremacy of the law of God over the wishes and the laws of man. However imperfectly this conception was carried out in fact—and the imperfections were great and glaring—it was a great service that Innocent rendered to Europe. The weakness of his position was twofold: it depended on the character and integrity of the particular Pope, and it inevitably involved a dependence on the secular arm.

His personal character it is hard for us to estimate. There is no doubt of his sincerity, nor that he desired to raise the standard of justice, order and morality throughout Europe in clergy and laity alike, and did much to achieve his desires. The historian who describes him as "this admirable man of business, this unscrupulous diplomat, this lawyer autocrat" admits that "he left Western

Europe better than he found it", and there are very few men for whom so large a claim can be successfully made.

His candidate for the Imperial crown, Otto, at first showed his gratitude by a large surrender to him of ecclesiastical rights in Germany and of temporal power in Italy; but, as his position grew stronger, he turned against his patron. Innocent found it necessary to set up a rival prince, and the only possible candidate was the young Frederic, by this time a married man of seventeen (1211). The Pope tried to safeguard his position by making him swear to surrender Sicily to his son when he himself was crowned emperor, and to keep the two kingdoms always separate. The promise was given and Frederic crowned next year, showing in turn his gratitude by confirming all the grants which Otto had made to the Papacy. So matters remained till Innocent's death in 1216: we have no means of knowing whether he realised what a dangerous rival he had raised for his successors.

### *Frederic II (1194-1250)*

For the next thirty-four years the stage in Europe (and in Palestine) is dominated by the tremendous figure of Frederic—*Fredericus secundus stupor Mundi et immutator mirabilis*, as Matthew Paris justly calls him. By descent he was doubly committed to struggle with a Papacy which not only challenged imperial rights, but was also secretly resolved to wrest from him his Norman inheritance of the kingdom of Naples and Sicily: as his father's son, he was bound to champion the one, and, as his mother's son, to defend the other. In this titanic contest he defeated three Popes, and, had he lived a year longer, must have triumphed over a fourth, but "he whom none could overcome succumbed to Death"; to papal circles it seemed that, when "Peter's bark was near to shipwreck", God "struck down the tyrant" and saved her.

To describe him adequately in a few sentences is impossible; any such description falls inevitably into a string of paradoxes: the persecutor of heretics, yet the only emperor placed by Dante among the heresiarchs in hell; the crusader, thrice excommunicated, for not going, for going, and for returning, yet successful in winning back Jerusalem where all other crusaders had failed; the last baptised man (till our own day) to rule in the Holy City yet suspected by his enemies of Mahommedanism; fighting for the ancient rights of the Holy Roman Empire with the help of an

army of Saracens; asserting royal claims despotically in Sicily, but in Germany surrendering them with open hand; in mere genius the greatest prince who ever wore a crown, but leaving the title "Frederic the Great" still vacant—to be claimed in a later age by a very different king.

Of what other sovereign in history could be said by the most sycophantic courtier what is said by a sober modern historian of him, that "his talents ranged in mastery over law, administration, war, diplomacy, precocious science, poetry and art"? And yet with all these amazing gifts he left nothing permanent behind him, being rather the last of every series to which he belongs, as truly as he was the last, in any real sense, of the emperors. "From this time forward", says the English chronicler Capgrave, "oure annotacioun schal be after the regne of the Kyngis of England: for the Empire, in maner, sesed here."

The reason, it has been truly said by one of his great admirers (Freeman, *op. cit.*), lies in the fact that there was "no single object which he honestly and steadfastly pursued", and that he suffered from "an utter want of nationality": so it came about that "the hero of the Empire was the hero of none of its component parts". Born and bred in Sicily, he cared more for it and for Italy than for any other part of his dominions; he was the last man who, under a happier star, might have made them into a strong kingdom: it was this fact which lent a peculiar bitterness to his struggle with the Papacy whose "independence had become inextricably entangled with the temporal dominion of Italy".

He was unfortunate also in the Popes with whom, in his manhood, he had to deal. Honorius, who succeeded Innocent III in 1216, was indeed conciliatory, but Gregory IX, who became Pope at seventy-seven, lived to be his bitter and remorseless antagonist for fourteen years (1227-41), and Innocent IV (1243-54), an able and unscrupulous ecclesiastic, was the most formidable of them all. He was a man whose "vengefulness, once aroused, never slumbered, never forgot, but pursued beyond the grave": he was bent on extirpating "the brood of Hohenstaufen vipers"; "the stars might fall from heaven", he said, "and the rivers run with blood, but this word should not be taken back". He had none of the greatness of soul of Innocent III, and his mind was set on one object—the establishment of his temporal power: for this end crusades were preached against Frederic, and crusaders bound for the Holy Land were called back for this holier war: four

weeks' service against the emperor secured as much "indulgence" as an expedition to Jerusalem.

Against him Frederic, when driven to bay, did not hesitate to appeal to the conscience of Christendom, denouncing the wealth and luxury of "proud prelates" and offering "more worthy guides" who should lead it back into the paths of purity and simplicity. Frederic was indeed a strange leader for a Christian Reformation, and a Church dominated by him would have been a wild experiment; but his justified protests against clerical worldliness (like those of Henry VIII three centuries later) appealed to the conscience of many and to the avarice of others: they form a sad commentary on the great edifice which Innocent III had raised. The triumph of Innocent IV was dearly purchased: "he won by the past of the Papacy, but at the cost of its future" (A. L. Smith, *Church and State in the Middle Ages*, p. 213).

### *Frederic's descendants*

The death of Frederic in 1250, at a moment when the tide seemed to be turning in his favour, did not end the danger from his House. His son Conrad, already King of the Romans, came to claim his Southern Kingdom: Innocent IV excommunicated him (for all the House of Hohenstaufen was under the ban) and proclaimed a crusade. After his sudden death, Frederic's brilliant illegitimate son, Manfred, hoped for the Kingdom of Sicily, but Innocent, before he died, had time to trick him and offer the throne to an English prince, whom Manfred soon deposed, receiving that crown in 1258 and also reviving his father's power in Northern and Central Italy.

The Hohenstaufen menace was still clear, and the French Popes who ruled from 1261-68 took a decisive and disastrous step. They offered the throne of Sicily to Charles of Anjou, brother of St. Louis, who in 1266 defeated and killed Manfred at Benevento. There remained yet one of the family, Conrad's son Conradin, a boy of fifteen: he crossed the Alps into Italy and reached Rome, but his army was beaten, and he himself brutally beheaded by Charles—a blood-red sunset for the House of Hohenstaufen. "The Papacy had rooted out the greatest dynasty in history, only to find itself bound to the chariot wheels of France." (A. L. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 224.)

But the family was not yet utterly extinct. The cruel government of Charles of Anjou (who had nothing in common with the

Norman Kings, except a desire to make himself Emperor of Constantinople), entirely failed to conciliate his subjects in Sicily. On March 30th, 1282—the day of the “Sicilian Vespers”—they rose in Palermo, crying “Death to the French” and massacred 4,000 of them.\* The crown was offered to Peter of Aragon, the husband of Manfred’s daughter. For twenty years the struggle lasted, to be settled in 1302 by a marriage uniting the House of Aragon with the House of Anjou. But Sicily remained separate under its Aragonese rulers till 1435, and, when it and Naples were united once more, it was a Spanish King who ruled over the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. The cynical ghosts of Roger and Frederic may have congratulated each other that in defiance of Popes and princes the Norman heritage was still held by a king of Norman descent.

### *Boniface VIII (1294-1303)*

The mediaeval Papacy did not long survive the mediaeval Empire which it had destroyed. For twenty years the Popes were occupied in struggles with the ambitions of their creature Charles of Anjou and with the growing power of the noble families of Rome. In 1294, as a counsel of despair, the cardinals chose a saintly hermit (later known as San Celestino). As might have been expected, he proved utterly incapable, and after five months was induced to abdicate; his place was taken by Boniface VIII, a man worldly, capable and ambitious.†

Boniface at once asserted, and even increased, the claims which Innocent III had made, and it was now manifest how preposterous those claims were when made by one whose personal character was not above suspicion and whose power was far from adequate to support them. He also developed the financial policy of Innocent IV. His declaration that the clergy must pay no taxes to the secular power was rendered futile, as we shall see, by Edward I in England and Philip IV in France, and in both countries did much to arouse national feeling against papal claims.

Though he failed in this direction, he was encouraged by some victories against the Roman nobles and by the success of a great

\* The old “Shibboleth” test was revived for the occasion, and Frenchmen who failed to give “ciceri” the correct Italian pronunciation were put to death.

† There were some who accused him of hastening Celestino’s abdication by a trick; but Dante, who had no reason to love Boniface (whom he places in hell), seems to have referred to Celestino when he spoke of the man “who made through cowardice the great refusal.”

"Jubilee" proclaimed in 1300, which brought many pilgrims to Rome and much money to his treasury. His claims grew more and more extravagant: in 1301 he issued a Bull declaring his power to disinherit kings, quoting the words of Jeremiah to prove that he was "set over the nations to root out and to pull down"; and, next year, another which contains the declaration that "subjection to the Roman Pontiff is for every human being altogether of necessity for salvation".

This claim, though perhaps logically latent in the declarations of his predecessors, had never been so nakedly expressed: when Boniface sat on the papal throne proclaiming "I am Emperor; I am Pope" the situation became impossible. Philip of France, defying excommunication, had Boniface kidnapped at Anagni, and the old man—he was eighty-six—died of the insults to which he was subjected (1303).

The new Pope withdrew to Perugia; the cardinals were distracted between the French and Italian parties, and at the next election a Frenchman was chosen who, after being enthroned at Lyons, settled down at Avignon (1309). The "Babylonish captivity" had begun, and for nearly a century the Papacy ceased to count as an independent factor in the politics of Europe.

### *The Decline of the Mediaeval Church*

This is the right moment for an attempt—and it can be no more—to form an opinion on the work of the Church in the Middle Ages and the causes of its decline. We have to explain (in the words of a learned and fair-minded critic\*) "when and how the Papacy, from being the Apostle of religion, the organiser of civilisation, the heart and soul of Christendom, began to change into a tyranny, an incubus and a byword". Of the greatness of its past services there can be no doubt: our critic pays full tribute to its "enormous superiority not merely as a religious centre but as the centre of law and government, its all-pervading activity, and the absolute and literal acceptance of it by the highest minds as the veritable oracle and tribunal of God". It is impossible to exaggerate the value of such an institution as a stabilising influence in such a period of European history. How and when did it lose this position, and come to be regarded, not without justice, as pursuing one most cherished object, "a territorial principedom in

\* A. L. Smith, *Church and State in the Middle Ages*, from which most of this section is derived.

Italy, till phrases such as 'the Church', 'the Faith' and 'the Cause of God' came to mean this petty aim and this alone"?

Our critic has no hesitation in placing the turning point between the deaths of Innocent III (1216) and Innocent IV (1254): his illustrations of his argument are drawn in the main from England, but if England was perhaps one of the most backward of Christian countries its clergy was also the most loyal to Rome (Matthew Paris calls it "*sacrosanctae Romanae Ecclesiae specialiter devotum*"), so that the change in its attitude is all the more remarkable.

Let us look first at the need of those reforms which the Papacy in its best days was beginning to secure. A papal legate to England in 1237 found, among other things, that the Sacraments were being refused till money was paid, that churches, deaneries and archdeaconries were farmed out for money, that non-residence and pluralities were rife, that many clergy were secretly married and succeeded in their benefices by their sons, that ecclesiastical judges were often ignored. Three years later a Bishop of Worcester gives us the picture of a clergy slack, ignorant, greedy of fees, and often illiterate.\*

These were the problems with which the Papacy had to deal, and which no other power could tackle with full authority: the choice, it was felt, lay between anarchy and the *plenitudo potestatis* of the Pope. The canon law which the Popes administered aimed at making a working reality of the Kingdom of God upon earth, at expressing its law in a coherent code, and enforcing it upon the still half-heathen kingdoms of the world: when Innocent III, in 1215, ordained that every Christian was to confess at least once a year to his own priest, he took a notable step towards realising his ideal of a Christian society. As long as the Papacy interpreted its laws with good practical sense and workable compromise, all was well, and the advantage of having a "universal ordinary" whose decision was final was clearly great. Grossetête, the great Bishop of Lincoln, was not wrong to see in the Papacy the only hope for the control, purification and reform of the Church in England.

But these conditions were not always fulfilled; Roman justice was not always just, and there were some who said that one could

\* The most famous instance of an illiterate cleric is the one who translated *Johannes ante portam Latinam* as "John, who, leading the way, carried Latin into England"; another priest confused Barnabas with Barabbas, and a third discovered a king called Busillis from the words "*in diebus illis*".

only approach Simon Peter through Simon Magus; again, Pope Alexander III had said that "when God deprived bishops of sons, the devil gave them nephews" (and Popes had nephews too). Even Grossetête, whose respect for the Papacy was unquestionable, felt bound to warn Innocent IV that "if the Holy See do not speedily correct itself, destruction will come upon it suddenly", while Louis IX warned the same Pope that in his demands for money he was "bringing new things upon the earth".

The fact, of course, is that the *plenitudo potestatis* makes a tremendous demand on the character of him who holds it: it takes, for example, a better man than Boniface VIII to reconcile the world to the doctrine that the Pope has all laws in his breast—*jura omnia in scrinio pectoris*. But it would seem that it was Innocent IV, with his repeated demands for money to be applied for political and personal purposes, and his insistence on his power of Provisions for benefices, who turned the national sentiment against the Papacy. He was a shrewd financier, and realised to the full the taxable potentialities of Christendom. So it came about that England came rapidly to agree with Matthew Paris, that bitter critic of the Papacy, and to accept the German demonstration that Innocenscius Papa adds up to 666, the number of the Beast, and is therefore Antichrist. To him more than to any single man must be ascribed the lamentable change: "the Papal states were a veritable body of death to the true spiritual life of the greatest institution in human history".

### *Germany 1204-1313*

We have already seen (p. 98) how the existence of the Empire retarded the unity of Germany, and in this century this was still its chief effect. After being distracted between two rival emperors till 1212, it was then involved in the Italian wars of Frederic II, and after his death there followed a practical interregnum of nearly a quarter of a century (1250-73), during which three candidates at various times claimed to bear the title of Emperor. The fact that their names were William of Holland, Richard of Cornwall (brother of Henry III), and Alfonso of Spain shows how little the interests of Germany as a whole were regarded.

In 1273 the choice fell on Rudolf of Hapsburg, and thereafter the honour was divided among princes of various German houses, until in 1438 the Hapsburgs practically acquired it as a



family possession. The emperor's rights as emperor were very shadowy indeed, and while the jealousy of the Electors led them to favour a comparatively weak prince, his policy was naturally to increase the possessions of his own House. Germany was ruled by a loose confederation of princes over whom the emperor's presidency was often purely nominal. Frederic II, who could have made a German Empire a reality, lacked the will and surrendered imperial rights: his successors had the will, but lacked the power to enforce it.

The great princes of Germany at this period were the rulers of Brandenburg, Saxony, and Bavaria, divided into Upper and Lower, both held by the House of Wittelsbach. These houses claimed to provide the four lay Electors of the emperor (the other three were Archbishops), but jealousy was caused by there being two Wittelsbach Electors, and in 1289 Bohemia, though a Czech state, was given one of their votes. Bohemia had been converted to Christianity and made a vassal of the Empire in the tenth century, and, under a strong king who reigned from 1253-78, had encroached on the imperial territory. Rudolf reconquered Austria from him, and so laid the lasting foundation of the Hapsburg power.\*

But though in this century little was done for German unity, there were two developments, which were full of importance for the future. The first was the growth of strong independent towns which managed to assert their power and to increase their commerce: in the fourteenth century these were to become a force to be reckoned with; the other was the acquisition of Prussia. We have already had occasion to mention the Teutonic Knights (p. 109) who were granted by Frederic II the investiture of any lands which they might conquer from the heathen there. The King of Bohemia joined in these crusades, and it is an ironic fact that the great Prussian fortress of Königsberg owes its name to a Czech king.

The Order, which had originally been founded to fight in Palestine, quarrelled with the Papacy, and the first of the Avignon Popes, under French influence, issued a Bull against it. The result was that the knights, to prove their sincerity as crusaders, moved their headquarters from Venice to Marienburg, and, deciding

\* This incidentally led to the first creation of the Swiss Republic, for the Hapsburgs, their powerful neighbours, now turned their attention Eastward. The original Swiss League was formed in 1291 (see p. 154).

rather to serve Germany than the Pope, conquered in its name a large district on the Vistula, including the city of Danzig. It is another ironic fact that it should have been a French king who was indirectly responsible for this great extension of German power, which was to lead in the end to the rise of the Kingdom of Prussia.

There is one emperor in this period who deserves to be recorded, Henry VII of Luxembourg (1308-13), who, in too late a day, revived the dreams of the Hohenstaufen. He descended into Italy, where he met at first with a rapturous welcome, for Italy, robbed of its Popes, seemed ready to acclaim its emperor. But the King of Naples held St. Peter's, and Henry could only be crowned in St. John Lateran. His death next year brought the dream to an end—a dream which might not be worth mentioning, were it not that it was shared by Dante, who saw in him the emperor of his vision, "the august soul who was to come to re-order Italy before it was ready for him", but for whom there was a lofty seat prepared in Paradise.

## CHAPTER IX

### The Thirteenth Century (*continued*)

#### *France 1204-1314*

If this century witnesses no great advance in the history of Germany, it sees the real creation of France as a great kingdom, and also the sowing of the seeds of its ultimate collapse. We have heard so much—not least from French sources—about “natural boundaries” that it is difficult for us to realise that French unity is in fact an artificial creation. When our period opens, the Kingdom of France was a narrow strip reaching neither to the Northern nor the Southern sea, embracing neither Normandy nor Brittany nor Maine nor Anjou nor Aquitaine nor Gascony nor Toulouse nor Provence nor Auvergne, nor any part of either the Kingdom or Duchy of Burgundy. To put it in another way, it was a France without Rouen, Chartres, Tours, Bordeaux, Toulouse, Avignon, Marseilles, Toulon, Lyons, Dijon or Amiens. Outside “the domain” the French king held but a shadowy suzerainty, though it might come to prove a valuable weapon.

The peoples in these various districts were distinct, often in race or language, and always in customs, from the inhabitants of the Kingdom. Bretons, Gascons, Provençals all had an idiom of their own, and the name Languedoc reminds us that the people of the county of Toulouse were men of a different speech.\*

When our period ends, only the Burgundies, Brittany, Aquitaine, Gascony and Provence remained outside the Kingdom, and the last was held by a member of the royal house. It would take too long to recount the stages by which these acquisi-

\* Languedoc was the home of the Troubadours, “devisers of singing melody and of dainty and delicate stanza, harmonious rhymes and graceful versification”, who had a great influence on English lyric poetry. (Hadow, *Treasury of English Literature*, I, 25.) In these days

the fair fields of France  
gave birth to myriad poets and singers unknown  
in the land of Raymond of Toulouse, but, as a result of the Albigensian war,  
a sinking millstone heavy as ever pontiff tied  
round the neck of the Church, . . . . .  
was Raymond's county ravaged to ruin, and his folk  
massacred all or burnt alive, man, woman and child,  
and their language wiped out, so that a man today  
reading Provençale song studieth in a dead tongue.

(Robert Bridges, *The Testament of Beauty*, Book III.)

tions were made: we shall hear of some of them when we consider English history. Philip, in whose reign the chief expansion took place, well earned the name of "Augustus", considered in those days to mean "the augments".

If in this period France becomes a great kingdom, it is perhaps not fanciful to trace in the three kings whose reigns occupy most of it some of the leading characteristics of the French nation; Philip Augustus representing its hardheaded realism, Louis its capacity for idealistic enthusiasm, and Philip le Bel the avarice and hardness of heart which it occasionally displays. (Even the somewhat insignificant Philip le Hardi (1270-85) showed a side of the French genius when he built Aigues-Mortes and Carcassonne.)

We need not trace the methods by which Philip Augustus in his long reign (1180-1223) steadily turned royal claims into realities; with the most important of his gains we shall have to deal when we come to speak of England. He was fortunate in having through most of his reign not to deal with Henry II, whom he somewhat resembled, though with less genius and more self-control, but with the impetuous Richard (whose death again occurred at a fortunate moment for him) and the rascally John. But he was an able statesman, and, though he was not a soldier, he won at Bouvines the first of French great military victories in 1214 (see p. 130). He was fortunate again in that in his reign Innocent III launched his crusade against the Albigenses who lived in Languedoc (see p. 125 n.); Philip wisely took no part in it himself, though he encouraged his subjects to enlist: he could not fail to see that the destruction of the power of the Counts of Toulouse, who supported their heretical subjects, would lead in the end to that union of Languedoc with the French Crown which actually came about fifty years after his death.

His crusading experiences are chiefly remarkable for the quarrels with Richard I for which they gave the occasion or the opportunity; his relations with the Church were unsentimental and practical, and he surrendered none of the privileges of the Crown—though Innocent III, after a long struggle in which France was laid under an interdict, forced him to take back the wife he had repudiated.

When he died, the Plantagenet power had fallen: the King of France was far stronger than any other French prince; his kingdom had increased more than threefold, and feudal government was beginning to give place to a centralised bureaucracy. Philip

Augustus deserves to be called the second founder of the House of Capet, and it is significant that he is the first French king who did not think it necessary to take the precaution of having his son crowned in his own lifetime.

His grandson, Louis IX, who succeeded his father in 1226 and reigned till 1270, had those qualities of a saint which appeal to all centuries alike. His personal piety was unquestionable, and so was his sense of responsibility in the sight of God for all those with whom he had to deal, especially, of course, his own subjects. If his austerities—he would have himself scourged with little iron chains—appeal to us as little as his severity with heretics, we doubt as little as his friend and chronicler, Joinville, that “this saintly man loved God with all his heart”. He held his crown from a sense of duty, and had no vanity in him, but that very sense of duty made him one of the chief founders of absolute monarchy in France. But, unlike many enthusiasts, and most absolute monarchs, he had a deep respect for law, and his utter honesty forbade him to wrest it to his own advantage.

He was a lover of peace at home and abroad, and succeeded in remaining on good terms both with Frederic II and his bitter enemies the Popes. The only warfare which interested him was that against the infidel, and his main political interest was to unite all Europe in a crusade. When this hope failed, he set out alone in 1249, and rightly aimed at Egypt, but was mistaken in seizing Damietta, which led him into a tangle of the waterways of the Nile delta. He was defeated and taken prisoner, and on his release spent four years in Palestine, strengthening the Christian strongholds there and planning schemes for the conversion of the Tartars. His second crusade—that on which he died in 1270—was diverted to Tunis by his evil genius, his brother Charles of Anjou, now King of Sicily (see p. 118), who had ambitious plans in the East and wished for no quarrel with Egypt.

Though he was a most loyal son of the Church, he was by no means subservient to any Pope. As we have seen, he refused to take part in their quarrel with Frederic II, and was ready on occasion to support his clergy against papal claims, or to reprove the bishops for covetousness.

His reputation for justice, well based on his arrangements for France, caused him to be in demand as an arbitrator abroad. He was called in to arbitrate between Henry III and his subjects, and though the result was, as might have been expected, in favour

of a brother monarch, the invitation proves his reputation for impartiality. He was not a reformer in the legal or political sense, but a wise administrator of his great inheritance, who regarded justice as more important than liberty. He left the Crown stronger than he found it, partly by the peace which he gave to the land but still more by a great increase in its moral prestige. "Happy the kingdom", says a thirteenth-century Office of St. Louis, "governed by a king foreseeing, pious, refined in his character, courageous in adversity. He used his riches to succour the poor, he despised the soft things of life. He established the throne on justice." (*C.M.H.*, VI, 361.)

But "power corrupts" and France had not long to wait before the corruption began. We might pass over without notice the reign of Philip III (Le Hardi), 1270-85, were it not that in his reign Languedoc, including the counties of Toulouse, Poitou, Auvergne and some of Provence fell into the hands of the Crown, as did also Champagne, and that, owing to the sinister influence of his uncle, Charles of Anjou and Sicily, he became involved in a quarrel with Aragon, which, as we have seen (p. 119) was claiming the Sicilian inheritance of the Hohenstaufen.

When his son, Philip IV, le Bel, became king (1285-1314), his realm embraced in direct sovereignty everything except the County of Flanders, the Duchies of Brittany and Burgundy, and that of Aquitaine; his attempts to acquire Flanders and Aquitaine, both unsuccessful, led to a strengthening of the commercial ties which united England to Flanders.

It is difficult to form a fair picture of Philip IV. We may be too much influenced by Dante, who calls him "the curse of France"—for Dante was partisan as well as poet—and some contemporary writers describe him as personally insignificant, but historians have agreed to regard him as cruel and cold-blooded, unscrupulous, hypocritical and ruthless, and can produce good evidence for their verdict. What is unquestionable is that in his day France entered on that career of administrative centralisation which was ultimately to lead to disaster.

The French kings had crushed the old feudal nobility, but had allowed another to grow up in its place: the great fiefs had been granted to members of the royal family—a practice begun by Louis VIII—on the theory that family loyalty would count for more than personal interests. France was to pay dearly for that mistake, as England did in the Wars of the Roses. But in the days

of Philip IV the danger had not developed, and he was able to carry out his centralising plans with no opposition from the great vassals. It is in Philip's reign that we begin to see the rise of a professional middle class, later to supply the lawyers, the "noblesse de la robe". They were to serve the monarchy well against the nobility and to supply its bureaucrats, so long as the kings were wise enough to use them: when, in the eighteenth century, they were neglected, they supplied the leaders of the Revolution.

Philip was very unlike his contemporary, Edward I, with whom he bickered about English possessions in Gascony (it was from this period that dates the French assistance to Scotland against England), but their careers in some respects are parallel and suggest both comparison and contrast. When Boniface VIII forbade the clergy to pay taxes to the Crown without his leave, both reacted violently, Edward by declaring them outside the protection of the law, Philip by forbidding the export of any money. Both reorganised the law, and both summoned "Parliaments"; but in Philip's case the "States-General" were only summoned to endorse the royal will, and the lawyers to show that that will was law—*que veut le roi, si veut la loi*; in England, as we shall see, things took a very different course.\*

Philip's most notorious and, in a sense, his most successful, political action was taken against the Papacy. Boniface refused, not unnaturally, to allow the king to degrade a French bishop without reference to him, and on his recalcitrance issued a series of Bulls, each more sweeping in its claims than the last. The result was the tragedy of Anagni (see p. 120), where he was seized by a band of French ruffians, and died of the shock. His successors shortly afterwards took up quarters at Avignon, which, though not technically in French territory, was under French control, and a series of French Popes were in effect the king's subjects for seventy years. This fact led to his other great success, in the realm of finance, for a French Pope connived at the destruction of the great Order of the Templars, whose wealth passed to the Crown. They were accused of blasphemy and heresy, and many of them burnt alive. Though some were induced to confess, the confessions seem to have been extorted by torture and were almost all repudiated: "the Order perished, suppressed not condemned,

\* As Prévité-Orton reminds us, the consent of the States-General to the decisions put before them was not necessary. They only came to hear what might be called a royal broadcast, and to obey. They came into being late, after and not before the doctrine of the fullness of the royal power had been defined by the legists.

butchered unresisting". It would appear that their destruction was as criminal as Philip's other financial expedient, the debasement of the coinage, though that brought on him a more general unpopularity.

But there could be no doubt that when Philip died in 1314 he left behind him an extremely strong machine, and an extremely powerful and centralised kingdom, with an authority and a prestige which would have seemed incredible little more than a century before.

### *England 1204-1327*

The history of England in this century is of the greatest interest and importance, and in it we were fortunate enough to benefit both by the vices and by the virtues of our kings. It may be said that in these years England began to realise the truth of the words put by Shakespeare in the mouth of Cloten:

Britain is  
A world by itself, and we will nothing pay  
For wearing our own noses.

The country developed a self-consciousness of its own, and, by what some will call luck and others national genius, found its way to real constitutional development.

The way was prepared by John (1199-1216), whose first service was to lose all the foreign possessions of the country except Gascony and some of Aquitaine. His attempt to recover them (made with the assistance of the emperor and his German troops), ended in disaster at Bouvines (1213). Even there, however, he unwittingly did his country service, for the victory encouraged the French to believe that their cavalry was irresistible, a mistake which was to cost them dear. The more important gain was that we were free to attend to our own insular affairs.

His next service was rendered when, by his abject submission to the Pope, by accepting him as his overlord and agreeing to pay a yearly tribute, he opened the eyes of his people to what papal overlordship meant. When, under his son Henry III, papal exactions were encouraged and increased, the country began to feel that it lost more than it gained by being involved in the struggles of Popes and emperors, and took no interest in schemes to make Richard of Cornwall (see p. 122) into a Holy Roman Emperor or Henry's son into a King of Sicily as a rival to Manfred (see p. 118).



But his greatest service was that, by persistent ill-faith and misgovernment, he united all England in a desire for some legal security and in a demand for a Charter of Liberties. It was Stephen Langton who took the lead—a very remarkable fact when we remember that it was the Pope's insistence on his becoming Archbishop of Canterbury which had led to John and the country being placed under an interdict and to John's ultimate submission.

Experts tell us that Magna Carta was not in itself the great Charter of Liberty as which it is commonly regarded. No doubt in a sense that is true. The barons were not idealists but realists, chiefly anxious about securing their own position; it was our good fortune that they were too weak to secure this without the help of the people, and so the rights which they primarily sought for themselves were secured for all "freemen". When, for example, it was laid down that no extraordinary taxes were to be imposed "unless by common council of our kingdom", it has been truly said that the first step had been taken towards the principle of "no taxation without representation".

"The alliance between the gentry on the land and the middle classes of the towns becomes the backbone of our constitutional history." (Rowse, *op. cit.*, p. 35.) It is interesting to contrast Magna Carta with the American Declaration of Independence, which some have regarded as its spiritual child: Magna Carta merely asserts old rights which the king has violated, whereas the Declaration asserts the principles on which human rights are founded; but it is a true instinct which sees in the earlier document the germ of much which was to come.

John, with the Pope's blessing, repudiated his oath, and it took eighty years, till 1297, before the Charter was finally confirmed by Edward I, a king who could be trusted to keep his word. That period sees the growth of Parliament, which, like Magna Carta, has its origin in the desire of the barons, the most important members of society, to protect themselves against a weak and dishonest king.

The first and greatest leader in this cause was Simon de Montfort, who roused the country against King Henry and his French wife. After the attempt to get satisfaction by the arbitration of St. Louis had failed \* (1264), the battle of Lewes next year put

\* It should be noted that Louis gave the verdict in favour of Henry provided he violated "no royal charter or praiseworthy custom"—both of which he repeatedly did.

Simon in power and the "parliament" which he summoned contained not only two knights for each shire but two burgesses for certain cities. Once more, we should remember that he summoned them, not from any abstract theories about representation, but because he knew that those particular towns would favour him; but the precedent was none the less important. When Simon fell at Evesham—himself a pure-blooded Frenchman, whose father had led the Albigensian "Crusade", but a great figure in English history—and Edward I (1272–1307) soon after came to power, he followed Simon's example, though not consistently. It was not till 1295 that his so-called "Model Parliament" met, with its earls and barons, archbishops, bishops, abbots, priors, representatives of the clergy, two knights for each shire, and two burgesses for every city and borough. It is of first-rate importance for English constitutional history that the clergy never sat as a separate Order: they soon tended to regard attendance at Parliament as a mere burden and preferred to vote their own taxes in their own convocations.

It will be seen at once how very different such a body was from the States-General summoned to approve the king's pleasure in France: it had grown from below not from above; its origin lay, in part, at least, in the council of barons set up to control the king. It still met only at the king's pleasure; it still sat as one body; membership was regarded as a burden rather than a privilege; but it did represent the nation, and it was that "common council" without which no new tax could be imposed.

The great Statutes of the realm were in the main in the interest of the barons and the king: that of Mortmain forbade lands to be left to religious houses without a licence; another allowed entail; another prevented land being granted so as to create new tenants in chief, but the knights, or "bachelors", or, as we should call them, "the country gentlemen", gained by the establishment in each shire of Justices of the Peace, whose amateur efforts kept justice in touch with public opinion, and prevented that excessive centralisation which came about in France.

We have spent much time over these constitutional points, which are our most important contribution to the century, but we must speak briefly of Edward's successful attempt to incorporate Wales into England and of his failure to do the same for Scotland. Wales he had conquered by 1301: the castles of Conway and Harlech, and the title of Prince of Wales given to his son, showed

that he meant to rule firmly but to treat it not as a subject land but as a real part of his kingdom.

It is obvious that he was right in his desire to unite the whole island, and if he had been able, as he hoped, to do so by a royal marriage, all might have been well; but the "Maid of Norway", the only direct heir, died on her voyage to Scotland, and Edward fell back on some feudal rights over Scotland which the Scots were unwilling to allow. They asked him to decide between claimants, and he chose Balliol, whose claim seems stronger than that of his rival, Bruce; but he refused to regard himself as Edward's vassal, and a war, first with him, then with Wallace, and afterwards with Robert Bruce the younger, lasted for the rest of his reign—to end disastrously years later at Bannockburn. As we shall have little occasion to speak of Scotland as a factor in European affairs, we may note that her resistance to Edward I was perhaps the first example of national patriotism: it is very remarkable that the country should unanimously have refused to accept the definite feudal rights which he asserted.

At Bannockburn the English knights (in 1314) fell (like the Franks at the Kephissos three years before, see p. 113) into "pottes" cunningly prepared for them in marshy ground, and, as was said with less justice of Flodden,

The stubborn spearmen still made good  
Their dark impenetrable wood:

after fourteen years of obstinacy Edward II recognised Bruce as King of Scotland.

Edward II's reign (1307–27) began in disaster and ended in disgrace. He and his successive favourites, Gaveston and Despensers, defied all the efforts of the "Lords Ordainers" appointed by the Great Council to control them, and in the end his queen joined with Roger Mortimer to depose and murder him. The sinister appearance of the "Favourite" is the only thing which distinguishes his reign from that of other weak kings in the feudal history of England.

### *Thirteenth-Century Religion: The Friars*

Broadly speaking, it may be said that all the religious movements of this period, whether heretical or orthodox, had their origin in fear and hatred of the world.\* We have already seen how,

\* Though no one would have sympathised more heartily than Francis of Assisi with Browning's line

O world, as God has made it, all is Beauty.

in almost every generation, monks left their own Order to found a stricter discipline of their own, and it was inevitable that in course of time some should be found to push renunciation to its logical conclusion, and to reject *all* possessions for their Order as well as for themselves.

The man who took this step was Francis of Assisi (1182-1226),\* the most lovable of the saints—a man in whom the love of God, and of man, and indeed of all created things, burnt with a pure and single flame. With him to lead it, the movement spread like wildfire: in every country in Europe his “poor little Brothers” carried their work of charity and their message of love to the poor and miserable, the leprous and the destitute.†

Two-and-twenty years after his death the Order numbered some 8,000 houses. It is easy to point out how soon his followers began to seek a divorce from “the lady poverty”, his bride, and how quickly they became embroiled with the parish clergy, whose laziness they reproved and whose rights they sometimes usurped, or with the bishops, whose allegiance they flouted in reliance on the Pope; it is easy to recall the bad name some of them had earned by Chaucer’s day. But, when all this has been said, Francis himself and his early followers will always remain one of the loveliest memories in the history of the Church, a standing testimony to the power of a simple readiness to follow Christ.

Even before his death the attempt to turn the movement into an orderly business-like arrangement had been (only too successfully) begun: to read *The Little Flowers of St. Francis* is to realise how alien this was from the spirit of its founder; it is partly because Francis was the least Latin of Italians that he has the most universal appeal.

In other minds the hatred of riches might lead to heresy, and to a belief (inherited from the Manichees, or perhaps from Bogomil, see p. 68) that all material things were evil. It was one thing to maintain, as many had done since Arnold of Brescia, that the Church was making an evil use of its possessions, and becoming luxurious and worldly, and another to hold that matter in itself was an evil thing. The official Church, which disliked the former doctrine, was on stronger ground in denouncing the

\* He was christened Giovanni, but was nicknamed “Il Francesco” because he learnt French in the interest of his father’s business as a cloth merchant.

† Grossetête, the great Bishop of Lincoln, a hater of monks, greeted the coming of the Friars with the words “the people that walked in darkness have seen a great light”.

latter. Again, while it could neither defend nor deny the corruption of many priests, it was right when it maintained that their unworthiness did not destroy the value of the Sacraments.

These appear to have been the chief heresies of the Albigenses, who were destroyed by Innocent III with a fury which is the greatest blot on his fame. It was quite true that a very dangerous form of "Christianity" was popular in Languedoc, one divorced from history and tending inevitably to deny the Incarnation, and that in some cases the Christianity was almost nominal; but Innocent should have remembered the warning of St. Bernard to "assail them, not with the sword, but with the word" (*aggrederere eos, sed verbo, non ferro*). His policy marks a new epoch: hitherto the Church had been content to allow, and sometimes to invite, the temporal power to deal severely with heretics; it was a "momentously new decision" when Innocent decided that it was the duty of the faithful to suppress heresy even against the wishes of the secular prince. (Eyre, *European Civilisation*, p. 681.) He proclaimed a crusade against them, and for twenty years (1209-29) every form of violence was employed: the heresy indeed was extirpated, but at the price of destroying the national life and culture of Languedoc.

This leads us to the second great founder of the Friars, St. Dominic (1170-1221), for it was his experience while trying to convert the heretics in Southern France by peaceful means which led him to feel the need of an Order of Preaching Brethren. His "hounds of the Lord"—*Domini canes*—were to pursue heresies, not heretics, and if they inevitably drifted into support of the Inquisition, that was not their founder's purpose. He adopted from St. Francis the rule of utter poverty, and though his Order was never so popular, it did great and much-needed service to Christian learning. His character is not so attractive as that of Francis: Dante is right in calling him a "Splendour", displaying God's glory, while Francis is an "Ardour", displaying God's love. Dominic, he says, was "good to his friends but dreadful (*crudo*) to his foes."

It is strange that the Franciscans, who at first were not even allowed to possess a book, should have come almost to rival the Dominicans in learning. If Thomas Aquinas (1228-74), the greatest of the schoolmen, was a Dominican, Duns Scotus (died 1308) was a follower of St. Francis—the word "Dunce" commemorates his rivalry with St. Thomas—and Roger Bacon (demon-

strator in the thirteenth century of the possibility of the flying-machine, the steamer and the motor-car) was another, though it must be confessed that he was condemned by a General Chapter of his Order in 1278. In Oxford, thanks to their patron Grossetête, Bishop of Lincoln, in whose diocese Oxford lay, they attained considerable influence, and it was due to him also that they sided with Simon de Montfort—a curious fact, for in Italy and Germany they had been as loyal to the Popes as Frederic's Saracens had been to him.

### *The Universities*

The universities, which in this period were becoming important throughout Europe, were for the most part natural growths, not foundations: students gathered round a great teacher, as they had round Abelard, and though in Paris by this time there was more organisation, it was only towards the end of the thirteenth century that "colleges" arose at Oxford and Cambridge, and then only as hostels to protect the young student from the perils, physical and moral, of his life: these young "clerks" came into residence at about fourteen and lived from hand to mouth, often in the greatest poverty, for several years. In the war against King Henry they, like their Franciscan teachers, were hot for de Montfort; it must be doubtful whether St. Francis would have approved the adventure either into profane learning or into politics. *The universities were one of the great gifts which we owe to the Middle Ages.*

NOTE.—In a work so short and so limited in scope as the present, it is impossible to give the universities the place they deserve. It may be worth while to give a few bare dates and facts to show that the universities of Europe were the product of the twelfth-century Renaissance. Salerno, a school of medicine since 1080, was "founded" in 1231: Bologna, for students of law, received some sort of Charter in 1158 and became a university in the last quarter of that century: Paris, surpassing Bec as the leading school of theology, received written statutes in 1210: the thirteenth century saw eight other universities in Italy, three in Spain, and the same number at least in France: Oxford, which in 1200 had at least fifteen hundred students, received its first statute in 1252: Cambridge, though the home of students at least since 1209, does not appear to have received official recognition before 1318. It is permissible for an Oxonian to pay a tribute to Walter de Merton, who in 1263 laid the foundations on which English college life has been built; and for a Dean of Durham to record that William of Durham, who died in 1249, by his will left three hundred and ten marks for the support of Masters of Arts in the university, and so appears to have been its first benefactor: "the college of William of Durham" has a right to the name "University" which it now bears.

## CHAPTER X

### The End of the Middle Ages

While it would be obviously absurd to suggest a definite date as the end of the Mediaeval period, it may be said that Dante's great poem (he died in 1321) sums up once for all the attitude towards life on which its thought was based. He sees human life as deriving all its meaning from God, and its inevitable end in Hell, Purgatory or Heaven: the destiny of the soul is the one question of supreme importance, and no one can doubt the reality of the world beyond, so vividly and almost tangibly portrayed (did not the people of Verona say of the poet *Eccovi l'uom ch' è stato all' Inferno?*). It was only in the Middle Ages that so sublime a unity of faith, knowledge and poetic emotion could be achieved.

Those days were soon to pass: that Chaucer, for example, was a man of deep religious feeling no one can doubt who has read the end of his *Troilus and Cressida*, but his tolerant and humorous genius finds a more characteristic field when he is painting with genial eye the pilgrims on the Canterbury road, or welcoming the "sweet showers" of April: the difference between the two men is more than a mere difference of temperament: it is a difference between two ages.

"Dante's divine poem", it has been said, "hangs like a blazing danger signal at the entrance to the Renaissance". As he strides through the ranks of those held in the eternal ice, "he stumbles against Alberigo, who suffered the most terrible fate of all. The Creator had taken his soul from him. The fate of the Renaissance was the fate of Alberigo. It was condemned to have no soul." (E. Friedell, *A Cultural History of the Modern Age*, I, 197.)

That is well, if somewhat rhetorically, said; but there are two obvious points which must never be forgotten. In the first place, the Renaissance was not an "occurrence" which can be dated with accuracy like the invention of printing, but rather a change in the spiritual and intellectual atmosphere operating in different regions at different times and with very different effects. In Italy, for example, its effects were manifest at a time when England was as

little affected by it as Jane Austen's heroines apparently were by the Napoleonic war.\*

Again, to pursue our atmospheric metaphor, the same bracing climate which brings death to the sickly may bring fresh health to the strong. To those who, in spite of their profession, were essentially worldly, the Renaissance gave a new excuse for unashamed worldliness: to those, on the other hand, who believed that (as the Apostle said) "in God all the treasures of knowledge and wisdom" (and we may add, "of beauty") "are hidden", it opened new occasions for worship and for a more personal search for the things of God.

A more personal search—for the Renaissance is above all a personal age: in it, as we have said, men looked at one another with a new and too often a purely selfish interest, but there were some who saw in themselves and their neighbours "children of God and inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven", and were led to doubt whether the clergy were not robbing them of their inheritance—for the "laity" (as the Greek language was soon to teach them) are so called because they are the people of God.

And they had another grievance against the clergy for the gloom which they spread over human life. No student of mediaeval sermons can fail to be struck by the emphasis laid on hell-fire, or by the cheerless prospect held out to the average Christian. Such emphasis inevitably provoked reaction, and though the new *joie de vivre* which is characteristic of the Renaissance was in the main divorced from religion, it was reasonable for good Christians to doubt whether the "good news" of the Gospel must necessarily be preached in a manner so depressing.

It is in such considerations as these that we may find the connection between the Renaissance and the Reformation of the fifteenth century. The hierarchy, as a whole, and notably the Popes, succumbed to the temptation of the world: on the thinking laity and on the more devout among the clergy, the effect was to make them more critical, and to cause them to demand, according to their temperament, that the existing Church should be either mended or ended. Both desires found fulfilment—as did the simpler desires of those who merely wished for a share in its riches: the Church at the Council of Trent mended its ways and stood

\* In England it is by no means clear that the Renaissance was a period of easily released vitality: "to the plain man", it has been acutely said, "it was not so much like shaking off shackles as losing his way or his spectacles." (*Times Lit. Sup.* Jan. 30, 1944.)



before Europe as a body which could no longer be accused of indifference to the things of God. On the other hand, it emerged a definitely Roman Catholic Church (see p. 219), and those whose dissatisfaction went deeper and who challenged some of the basic principles accepted at Trent, inevitably sought satisfaction elsewhere; the churches which they formed, though united by a common allegiance to the Christian faith, differed from one another, and from the Church of Rome, in the weight which they gave respectively to tradition and to the Bible, and in their conception of the intention of the Founder of their faith. This was a shattering blow to mediaeval conceptions.

As we take leave of the Middle Ages, we must make some attempt to understand them, however impossible the task may prove. They have been rightly called the Ages of Faith—a phrase which is misunderstood both by those who take it to mean a Golden Age, forgetting the ignorance, squalor, cruelty and immorality which disfigured it, and still more by those who set faith and reason in opposition and regard the latter as man's highest attribute.

Mediaeval society was held together by the universally accepted belief that Christ founded a Church, membership of which was man's primary duty: the contests between Popes and Emperors were not regarded as contests between Church and State, but "as struggles for precedence between different officers of a single society or between rival departments in one body" (Figgis, *op. cit.*, p. 57). This belief was not challenged either by those who came, not without reason, to doubt the papal claims, or by those who were shocked, with good cause, by the failings of professional Christians: it was held, as a matter of theory, by many who made no attempt to obey the Church's laws.

As has already been said, it was a time of great ideas accepted by men who never tried to translate them into practice. It is easy for us to sneer at such an attitude, and there are countless contradictions in mediaeval life which may excite our laughter, but that should not be the "superior" laughter of wise men mocking at fools, but rather the sympathetic smile with which we greet the inconsistencies of children who, it may be, are sometimes nearer to truth than their elders. We may laugh at arguments based on Old Testament precedents or at perversions of text,\* but there is

\* E.g. the use of "My Kingdom is not of this world" to prove that the Pope's political claims were in origin divine.

nothing laughable in having a great ideal to which one fails to rise, and the failure of man so to rise is no proof that the ideal itself was mistaken: if it were, it would disprove our own ideas as clearly as those of the Middle Ages.

Rightly or wrongly, in those days men set ideas above practice: their central thought may be summed up in the phrase "*universalia sunt realia*", which may be freely translated "it is only ideas that are real". It was the contrast between the greatness of their ideas and the feebleness of their performance which brought the ideas into disrepute, as in all ages it has naturally but most unreasonably done. It may well seem absurd to speak of "feebleness of performance" in connection with the ages which gave us the triumphs of Gothic architecture and indeed created something entirely new in the visual arts; but the competence which never deserted them in their most daring artistic flights seems strangely to have failed them in translating into practice great principles either of religion or of politics.

The Middle Ages were followed by a period of reaction in which men increasingly abandoned the search for any guiding principle in life, disparaged "the things of the spirit", and devoted their attention to material affairs. The "practical man" came into his own, whereas the Middle Ages, for all their glorious achievements in architecture, set dreams above deeds. It may not be fanciful to suggest that the eminently practical Perpendicular style connotes a spiritual decline.

This is no place for a dissertation on the Nature of Man. The Age of Reason, or even Mechanisation, in which we live, has done much, but it will have to find a real faith of its own before it abolishes war and makes a stable peace: an unreasoned faith in democracy is a poor substitute for faith in God.\* If it is a mistake to idealise the Middle Ages, it is a still greater mistake to despise them, and those who have the task of establishing a "New Order" in Europe may well look with envy at a time when there was, at least in theory, a general agreement as to the purpose of man's existence.

"And now it is all gone—like an unsubstantial pageant faded; and between us and the men of the mediaeval world there lies a gulf of mystery which the prose of the historian will never

\* A democracy which bases the brotherhood of man on the Fatherhood of God is clearly not open to this criticism.

adequately bridge. They cannot come to us, and our imagination can but feebly penetrate to them." \* It is vain to ask when such a change took place, but the conjecture may be hazarded that a line of division is to be found in the early years of the fourteenth century. After Boniface (*d.* 1303) no Pope, and after Henry VII (*d.* 1313) no Emperor, asserts claims which are clearly mediaeval. The very names have a different sound; Hohenstaufen is as clearly mediaeval as Visconti (for example) is not. In Eastern Europe too the unfamiliar name of the Seljuks, hitherto the most formidable of the Turks, is replaced by that of the Ottomans, who under Othman (*d.* 1326) succeeded to their power.†

We may suggest, with becoming diffidence, that something similar may be observed in the arts: we have seen the gulf which separates Dante from Chaucer; a similar gulf separates the painting of the thirteenth century from that of the Quattrocento which follows it: to appreciate Giotto requires some cultivation of taste; his successors make a direct appeal.

The fourteenth century, with its comparative lack of striking incidents and dominating personalities, provides, as it were, a lull between the heroic conflicts of the past and the contests, equally bitter but less heroic, which Europe was soon to see. The "great men" of the century were its architects whose very names we seldom know.

### *European Unity (3) 1300-1800*

In these 500 years European political history consists of little more than a scramble for power with an increasing disregard for moral considerations: "Christendom, the union of the various flocks under one shepherd, was transformed into Europe, the habitat of competing sects and compact nations." (Figgis, *From Gerson to Grotius*, p. 27.) The Middle Ages had, in theory at least, accepted the view of life as divinely governed by emperor and Pope, however completely individual men and nations may have disregarded it in practice. The Renaissance, it has been truly said, taught men to think horizontally—that is, no longer to fix their

\* The quotation is from a passage in Froude's *History* (I, ch. 1), which should be familiar to every lover of history or of great prose: in it the words "men of the mediaeval world" have been substituted for "old English".

† It was in 1308 that the first Turkish troops crossed into Europe—"an epoch-making event" (*C.M.H.*, IV., 658), though they were not Ottomans but in the nominal employ of the Emperor of Constantinople whom they came to attack.

eyes on heaven above and hell beneath, but to look simply at one another and to accept the human standards of the moment as ultimately valid. Self-interest, whether nakedly and unashamedly professed, or "enlightened", as in the eighteenth century, was the dominant motive, and kings and princes acted as their dynastic or national ambitions suggested: only occasional thinkers like Erasmus (1517) and Grotius (1625) took a wider view.

The French Revolution for a moment seemed to raise the question to a higher level, but Napoleon brought it down again to that of a struggle to establish the domination of France and of himself. The imminence of the peril which they had escaped brought the nations to a sense of the need for co-operation. It may seem strange to rank as a forward step the Tsar's schemes of a Holy Alliance to make autocracy safe in Europe, and they met with the fate which they deserved, but they contained the germs of a European co-operation such as had not been dreamt of for centuries. When the Tsar's successor, at the end of the nineteenth century, invited the powers to consider their common dangers at the Hague, although the results were negligible once more, another step had been taken on the same road; and that the First World War should have ended in the creation of a League of Nations was a result unthinkable even a century before. It is not the historian's duty to prophesy, but he can at least record the dawning of a sense, unknown since the Renaissance, that nations do not necessarily live for themselves alone.

## CHAPTER XI

### Europe 1308-1420

#### *Summary*

This period of more than a century is singularly lacking in striking events or in personalities of European importance: it has even been plausibly maintained that in these years no single man had more effect on European history than Timour the Tartar, of whom we shall hear later.

The fact is not without explanation. The Papacy and the Empire had, in a very real sense, destroyed each other; the Popes remained in Babylonish captivity at Avignon for seventy years, and the Church was then distracted by a Schism which lasted for half a century: it was only in 1420, the last year of our period, that a Pope universally recognised could return to Rome. The Empire was sinking more and more into a mere presidency, and was held by princes of various houses, the greatest of whom, Charles IV, a Luxemburg prince and a great King of Bohemia, issued a Golden Bull (1356) definitely legalising the position of the Electors and the weakness of the Crown.

France and England for most of the period were distracted by the Hundred Years War, which began with Edward III's invasion in 1337, was very temporarily suspended by the Treaty of Brétigny (1360), and was resumed in full vigour by the invasion of Henry V in 1415. When the period ends, the Treaty of Troyes (1420) had promised the throne to him and to his son (who was born the next year). Crécy, Poitiers and Agincourt, glorious as they were, were to have no lasting effect on European history.

Italy, now that four attempts to unite her (made by Manfred, Charles of Anjou, Boniface and Henry VII) had successively failed, cannot be treated as a whole. The French still held the Kingdom of Naples in the South (Sicily having passed to a Spanish ruler), but for the rest it is the age of despots and republics: of the former the most notable are the Visconti at Milan and the Scaligers at Verona, and of the latter Venice, Genoa and Rienzi's brief republic in Rome (1347).

Our period contains the promise of great art. Giotto was lately dead, and painting was only to revive with Masaccio just after our

period, but towards its close Brunelleschi and Ghiberti were masters of architecture and sculpture, and the Doges' palace had begun to rise, while Petrarch and Boccaccio were the prophets of humanism in literature. These are great names—as is that of Chaucer in England—but any attempt to do justice to them would carry us too far from our main theme.

In Spain, Castile and Aragon are steadily growing stronger, the latter by acquiring the Balearic Isles in addition to Sicily, but Castile is torn by a civil war in which England unfortunately is involved: its day must wait till in the fifteenth century Aragon and Castile are united under Ferdinand and Isabella.

It would appear, therefore, so far as the west of Europe is concerned, that the older countries make, as nations, comparatively little progress. The only event of European importance is the rise of Switzerland, which will call for special notice.

In the east of Europe events are plentiful though seldom cheerful, and outstanding personalities are rare. There, too, the great events are concerned with the rise of new states such as Russia and Poland.

But, from any point of view which is not merely political, this century has an importance all its own. It is the age in which the Renaissance begins, and that in which the Middle Ages may with most reason be said to end.

### *The Renaissance*

The term "renaissance" is misunderstood if it is thought to suggest the rebirth of the classical spirit: there was very little which was "classical" in the early Italian renaissance, and it was only in the sixteenth century that its architecture, for example, was transformed by classicism. Its spirit is summed up in the words which Pico della Mirandola puts into the mouth of God: "Thou canst by the freewill of thy spirit regenerate thyself a god-like being". God, it will be observed, has not abdicated, but has, so to speak, retired into the background as a benevolent spectator: man is "master of his fate" and "captain of his soul".

Freedom is the essential note, and as new discoveries came to enlarge man's horizon, both literally and metaphorically, the area of his freedom seemed boundless. As the Church was the chief restraining influence, it had to bear the brunt of the attack, which it was at the moment ill qualified to meet. So it came about that the new knowledge, sought with genuine and most attractive enthusiasm, proved (or seemed), when found, to be "opposed to

the basis on which life had been built" (Creighton, *Historical Essays*, p. 105). It found a congenial home in Italy, both because of the native genius of its people, and because of the rapid development there of city life, which in its turn was due to the growth of wealth in the great banking and trading houses, whose chiefs made their homes there. Italian cities were real and beautiful places, in days when those of the North were but "walled-in mediaeval villages". Again, in Italy, class prejudices had disappeared almost unnoticed: soldiering was a professional business unworthy to be pursued by men of taste, especially since there had been loosed on the world what Don Quixote calls "the dreadful fury of diabolical engines of artillery".\*

Given these conditions, in which the career was in a real sense open to the talents, it is not surprising that the early Italian magnates revived the glories of the slave-owning gentlemen of Athens, nor that their moral and political decline was equally swift in coming. The Church might have preserved the balance and consecrated this new birth of human genius, but from 1300 to 1420 it had been fatally weakened by the Exile and the Schism, and when the Popes returned to Rome it was not long before they themselves became infected by the Renaissance spirit. Pius II, the typical Renaissance Pope, was, despite his faults, a very attractive personality, but he was by no means the man to assert the divine supremacy over all human life, or to preach the unimportance of earthly things as compared with His service. "The Papacy, which had so long held fast to the Orthodox faith at all hazards, had now fallen victim to a heresy worse than any she had in former times combated, the heresy of the Renaissance." † (Creighton, *op. cit.*, p. 57.)

\* Cannon (which was doubtfully employed at Crécy in 1346) was not used in the field for many years later. In the fifteenth century it proved the impotence of mediaeval walls (as at Constantinople), but in the sixteenth the engineer had his revenge on the gunner, and fortification improved so much that wars tended to become a record of sieges. The French were the first to use field artillery with effect, as in Charles VIII's invasion of Italy in 1494, but the Spanish were first to develop the use of the smaller firearms, and Gonsalvo da Cordova (about 1500) was using them successfully, the French imitating him after Pavia (1525).

† Machiavelli's *Prince* was written in 1513 (for the instruction of the young Lorenzo). He was by no means the "devilish" philosopher suggested by the title "old Nick". In fact, he was not a philosopher at all, but a passionate believer in efficiency with no belief in any "natural law". The rule "*salus populi suprema lex*", on which all nations act in times of crisis, was exalted by him into an everyday rule of action, and he demanded that the individual should sacrifice to the community his purse, his person and his conscience. There is a clear affinity between him and the Jesuits, and also Nietzsche, who made claims for the Superman similar to those which Machiavelli made for the State. "Where the salvation of country is at stake no consideration of justice or injustice can find a place, nor of mercy or of cruelty, honour or dishonour" (Figgis, *op. cit.*). Florence and Berlin join hands across the centuries.

So the Renaissance, for all its splendour, remained a soulless age, and the call to "seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness", first sounded by Savonarola, and silenced in the flames of Florence fanned by a Borgia Pope, had to be sounded again in Germany with more enduring results.

Those who, for controversial purposes, trace to the Reformation the breakdown of moral restraint in Europe, with all its consequent troubles, appear to forget that the Renaissance had preceded it: it was the failure to grapple with the former movement which gave the excuse and provided the impetus for the latter.

Having dealt at length with the great principles underlying the change which came over Europe, we have now to turn to the detailed history of those countries affected by it, and will look first at the papal court of Avignon.

### *The Papacy 1308-1420*

The court at Avignon, though most of its Popes were personally respectable, earned a bad name for corruption, and, as absentees, naturally found it hard to keep any hold on Italy.\* Absence made the Italian heart grow fonder of the Popes, and a return was made in 1376. But at the election two years later, the French cardinals elected an anti-Pope, who returned with them to Avignon, and the great Schism had begun. It is needless to explain the damage which this inflicted for half a century on papal prestige. Critics like Wycliffe in England began to doubt whether the Papacy was of divine origin, and his views spread to Bohemia, where they were espoused by John Huss.

It began to be felt that a General Council alone could restore unity to the Church: one which met at Pisa (1409) did little but add a third Pope to those already in the field, but that of Constance (1414-17) was more successful.† The three Popes were liquidated and Martin V elected, in spite of those who wished that some reform of the Church should precede any new election. That the Council was a conservative body is shown by the fact that one of its early acts was to burn Huss (as a religious outlaw

\* It was the Avignonese Popes who first claimed unlimited rights in the free disposal of all ecclesiastical benefices—a claim resisted in England and France, but admitted in Spain till the middle of the sixteenth century (*The Church and the Papacy*, Jalland, p. 433).

† It is worth noting, as a sign of things to come, that at Constance the voting was by *nations*, sitting as such.



with whom no faith need be kept) in spite of the safe conduct which the emperor had given him, and Martin was a conservative Pope. He went back to Rome in 1420, and though the popular verdict at first was that Pope Martin was "not worth a farthing" (*il Papa Martino non vale un quattrino*) he restored order both in the city and among his cardinals.

But the emergence of Councils as supreme directors of Church affairs was full of danger for the Papacy, which they might seem to threaten as seriously as emperors had done in the past. "Concilium generale", said the Council of Constance, "potestatem immediate e Christo habet"—a very revolutionary claim.

### *France 1308-1420*

In 1320 the good fortune which had so long provided the House of Capet with heirs in direct succession failed it at last, and by the Salic Law, which excluded females or their heirs, the Crown passed to Charles of Valois, the late king's uncle. Edward III put forward a claim which was poor in law (for if female succession had been allowed there was another claim stronger than his), and in 1337 war began: the real reasons were that the French were unfriendly to us in Scotland and in Gascony, that they threatened our trade with Flanders \* and, perhaps most important, that France was a profitable land to plunder.

In the first stage of the war we won successes on sea and land, at Sluys, Crécy and Poitiers, of which more will be said later. In the second (after 1360) our fortunes declined, thanks to the wise tactics of du Guesclin and the wisdom of the French king in reorganising his army: with Henry V the tide turns again; thanks to the quarrels of the Dukes of Orleans (whose followers were called Armagnacs) and Burgundy: in 1415, with Burgundian help, Henry enters France, wins the battle of Agincourt, and with the Treaty of Troyes (1420) secures the succession to the throne for himself and his heirs. Our period ends with France for the second time in the trough of the wave.

The Chronicles of Froissart (born in 1338) are the most permanent legacy of the Hundred Years War. He is a great narrator (Gray calls him "the Herodotus of a barbarous age"), telling his story with a simplicity and directness of style common to his age, and the peculiar charm of the old French language. He may also

\* We provided the wool and the Flemings worked it, and the trade was so important that some said the English badge should be a "sheep" and not a "ship".

be regarded as the first exponent of that art of memoir writing in which his nation has always excelled.

The only other events of importance in French history are the Black Death and the acquisition of the Dauphiné (to be the apanage of the king's eldest son), which for the first time brought the French frontier to the Alps by 1350.

### *England 1308-1420*

The external history of England in this century is almost as monotonous as that of France. The war was popular in England, for the country was in a militaristic mood, and its new-born patriotism found vent in a violent hatred of the French. The military lessons of the war will be dealt with separately: here it need only be said that its results in 1360 were to give us (temporarily) Aquitaine and Gascony in full possession, and in 1420 to give us (more temporarily still) the dominion of France.

Let us turn to domestic affairs and consider them from various points of view, economic, religious, literary and political: in all these spheres events were occurring of more ultimate importance than the Hundred Years War.

1. *Economic*.—The Black Death, which ravaged all Europe, fell on England in 1348 and destroyed more than a third of the population: this inevitably brought us to our first labour crisis. Serfs had been commuting their services for money, and, as the supply of labour dropped so sharply, naturally put a higher price on their work. The landlords, not unnaturally, refused to pay, and Parliament, which was very far from being a democratic body, passed a savage statute enforcing the old rates. It was a situation which more democratic parliaments, in more enlightened ages, have found it far from easy to deal with, and the inevitable result was a series of organised revolts. The most serious were those headed by Wat Tyler from Kent, and John Ball, who captured the Tower of London (1381). The young King Richard bravely met the rebels, promising to be their leader and to grant them emancipation and a fair wage, but he had no power to fulfil his promise, and the matter was ultimately settled by the law of supply and demand. Less labour was employed and many landlords took to sheep farming: others granted land on lease to tenants, and the modern farmer came into existence: by characteristically English methods, serfdom gradually ceased, and the face of rural England gradually changed.

2. *Religious*.—The discredit into which the Papacy had fallen through its residence in France (which naturally did not endear it to the English) and through the Schism, led to many searchings of heart which found expression from John Wycliffe (1324?–84). He was scandalised at the wealth of the Church, and would have liked all clergy to live on freewill offerings. He gradually came to hold that “dominion is founded on grace”, or, in other words, that goodness is the only real title deed to property—a view as unpopular with great landowners then as it would always be. So long as the doctrine was only applied to the clergy, it made much appeal to great and ambitious nobles like John of Gaunt, who were beginning to envy the wealth of the Church.\*

From social theories Wycliffe passed to novel doctrines in religion, and was accused of heretical views about the sacraments: he certainly believed the Bible to be the only standard for Christians, which led him to the great step of causing it to be translated into English—a great service both to religion and to the English language. He was allowed to die in peace, but in 1428 his body was disinterred and his ashes thrown into the river. A friar—the friars were always his bitterest enemies—described him as “the orgon of the divel, the enmy of the Church, the confusion of men, the miroure of ypocrisie, the nourischer of scisme”.

His followers, called Lollards, were persecuted, some being burnt at the stake under a law which gave a new and formidable legality to such punishment: they were driven underground, but did much to prepare the way for the Reformation, as we shall see that Wycliffe’s teaching had done in Bohemia (see p. 175).

3. *Literary*.—Wycliffe’s translation of the Bible had seen, if not the birth, at least the christening of English prose. A brief quotation will show what we owe to him and his assistant Purvey: “Synge we to the Lord, forsothe gloriously he is magnified: the hors and steyer-up he threwe down into the see. . . . The Lord is a man fighter, Almighti his name; the chare of Pharao and his oost he threwe fer into the see. His chosen princes weren turned upsedown in the reed see: the depe waters covereden hem: they descendiden into the depths as a stoon.” Chaucer (*d.* 1400) marks the birth of English poetry. It is hardly possible to exaggerate his greatness, or our debt to him. Supreme as a story teller, a drawer of character and a master of metre; almost infallible in his selec-

\* The great clergy of those days, though not conspicuous for piety, were often, like William of Wykeham, making good use of their revenues.

tion of words; capable of rising to the greatest heights, but never losing sympathy with the common people, he did more for the English language than any single man: and it is our rare good fortune that our first great poet was also a great humourist.

4. *Political*.—In this period we see the beginning of that same rivalry among the great families which we have seen distracting France, and which was in the next century to result in the Wars of the Roses. We need not linger over the details of Richard's deposition by the House of Lancaster: he is a more fruitful subject for tragedy than for history, and his struggles against the "Lords Appellant" are tedious reading. But it is worth noting that at his deposition he was charged with having declared the laws to be "in his own breast": it was a definite assertion that the king was not above the law. From another point of view it is interesting to note that Henry V was the first king to use English in his official correspondence (Rowse, *op. cit.*, p. 43).

### *The Great Battles of the Hundred Years War*

We are right to treasure the heroic memories of Sluys, Crécy, Poitiers and Agincourt, but honesty compels us to admit that the land battles were largely lost by the folly of our enemies, and that at Sluys, a sea battle won by our archers, we relied rather on having the sun in the enemy's eyes than the wind in our own favour.

But we do deserve the credit for having learnt by our failures, which the French were slow to do. Bannockburn had taught us that our archers could not hold their own against cavalry without support, and we had determined to give that famous arm its full opportunity. The longbow, the great national weapon (though apparently discovered in South Wales) first comes to the front in the wars of Edward I, and we were "democratic" enough to rely on it while the French still regarded their archers as "useless rabble" and trusted to their mounted men-at-arms: so it came about that at Crécy our archers and our dismounted horsemen defeated thrice their number of the enemy.

At Poitiers, the French king, imagining that the secret lay in dismounting his men-at-arms, forgot to combine them with his archers, and apparently thought that the tactics of offence and of defence were the same, and so "a battle far more hazardous and far better fought than that of Crécy" ended in an even greater disaster to the French, though they had in their favour odds of

nearly ten to one: in both these campaigns our strategy was as deplorable as our fighting was magnificent.

At Agincourt, in spite of all that du Guesclin had taught, the same mistakes were repeated: the English were again allowed to fight one of the defensive battles in which they excelled: the 30,000 French were again crowded on ground too narrow for their numbers: their heavy armour, weighted with plates of mail, made it almost impossible for the dismounted knights to move, and the result was a mere slaughter in which 8,000 knights were killed and 1,500 taken prisoner. It is not surprising that the war was popular in England.\* We might say of the French, as the Duke said of them at Waterloo, "they came on in the old way, and we beat them in the old way".

### *Germany 1308-1420*

With the Papacy exiled to Avignon (and greatly weakened after 1378 by the Great Schism) and France and England pre-occupied by their war, there was a great chance for Germany to develop into a strong and united state: that it was not taken was due to the disastrous legacy of the Empire.

The great houses continued to compete for the imperial power: the Wittelsbachs of Bavaria were first in the field, and Lewis IV was emperor from 1314-47. He added greatly to his family possessions—usually an emperor's first concern—and carried on a struggle with the Popes, a pale shadow of the great conflict of a century before, which incidentally increased his popularity in Germany: but both his private successes and his public incompetence combined to give the throne at the next election to the House of Luxemburg, which then held the throne of Bohemia.

### *The House of Luxemburg*

The Luxemburg House held the Empire for a century (1347-1438), and left a very definite mark upon it. They were the first of the great houses to make a sustained attempt to establish a dynasty of emperors, and at one time seemed likely to succeed, but their line died out and the Hapsburgs followed, to succeed where they

\* The so-called Peace of Brétigny (1360) led to the formation of independent bodies, or Free Companies, which ranged far afield. The most famous commander was Sir John Hawkwood, who commanded an English band in Italy, and was celebrated as the only one who never broke faith. His equestrian monument in the Cathedral of Florence recalls that he was "the most skilful general of his age"—a height of fame reached by only one other Englishman—John, Duke of Marlborough. (Fortescue, *Brit. Army*, I, 51, 2.)

had failed. In their time two important changes came about: the position of the Electors were defined and strengthened, and the papal claim to any voice in an imperial election was finally rejected.

Charles IV (1347-78), though not the first Luxemburg emperor—he was the grandson of that Henry VII on whom Dante had set his hopes—was the architect of the family greatness: his father was the blind knight errant King of Bohemia (which he had acquired by marriage) who lost his life at Crécy, and left his motto to our Princes of Wales. Charles was no knight errant, and had no tinge of romance, but he had a shrewd mind which he concentrated on the fortunes of his family. His plan was to establish the election of emperors on a stable and sensible footing, and then to make the House of Luxemburg-Bohemia so strong that its representative must inevitably be elected: the first object he accomplished by the “Golden Bull” of 1356: in the second he failed, for his only grandchild was a daughter whose marriage with a Hapsburg brought to that House in 1438 the prize which he had designed for his own.

His policy with regard to the Electors has been differently estimated: some hold that he merely “legalised anarchy and called it a constitution”, and there is no doubt that his Bull greatly increased the power of the Electors, who in 1399 were strong enough to depose his incompetent son Wenzel. On the other hand, his advocates maintain that he thereby enlisted their sympathies with the cause of Germany, and that he was right both to realise that the days of the Empire as an international force were numbered, and that a strong and coherent German state was needed to face the growing power of France: they also give him credit for resisting papal claims to influence German affairs.\*

However this may be, they are on sure ground in claiming that he was a really good King of Bohemia, raising Prague and its University to a high position in the Empire, and that he genuinely did his best to bring the Popes back to Rome and set them free from French influence, though his efforts ended in failure, and, in fact, resulted in the Great Schism (see p. 146).

On the other hand, he sinned against his own principles by dividing his possessions among his sons, who all failed to realise his hopes. Wenzel the eldest, who succeeded him as emperor, was

\* During the Luxemburg period the papal claim to crown the emperors was tacitly abandoned. (Prévité-Orton, *op. cit.*, p. 316.)

an unamiable glutton, whose deposition in 1399 led to a disputed succession, and Sigismund, who was elected in 1410, has only one definite achievement to his credit: this was the summoning of the Council of Constance in 1415. Though, as we have seen (p. 147), he failed to dominate it, it has been described as the last occasion when the emperor "exercised his international functions": Charles IV had been right in thinking that the time for such activities was past.

Sigismund left only a daughter whose marriage to Albert of Hapsburg (emperor 1438-40) gave the Hapsburgs the opportunity to accomplish, by methods not unlike his own, that enduring supremacy at which Charles had aimed.\* (The genealogical tables on pp. 378 and 379 should be consulted for this and the following chapter.)

Throughout this period the towns were growing in strength, and began to form themselves into leagues, sometimes for security, sometimes (as in the case of the famous Hansa League) for the increase of trade,† sometimes, like the Swabian League, "to scourge and punish their mutual enemies": in offence they might be weak, but their walls were too strong for the elementary siege operations of the day, and they were becoming a force which emperors and princes had to consider and at times conciliate: Switzerland, as we shall see, grew out of a local confederation of this kind.

### *Italy*

In Italy the absentee Pope still had considerable influence, exerted chiefly through the Angevin King of Naples, but Italian politics in this period are so confused, or, rather, so disconnected, that it will be wiser to postpone any discussion of them till the next century, when the pattern of events can be more clearly seen (see p. 179).

As a reminder of the unity of Europe we may note that the Black Death, of which our best account is given by Boccaccio, had

\* Sigismund, in 1411, handed over the electorate of Brandenburg to Frederic of Hohenzollern, thereby founding the fortunes of yet another imperial house. Brandenburg had been acquired by Lewis the Bavarian, the Wittelsbach Emperor, in 1323, and had passed to Charles IV fifty years later, he promising then that it should always be united with Bohemia.

† The Hanscatic League (the word "Hansa" means association) was originally a combination of merchants in various cities of the Baltic and North Seas for simple convenience of trading: about 1300 it was formally centred round Lübeck, and in the fourteenth century fought successful commercial wars against Denmark. Charles IV in 1375 treated it with great respect.

helped to secure the election of Charles IV in 1348, on the theory that a time of such crisis was not fitted for political disputes.

### *The Rise of Switzerland*

Though we are no longer allowed to believe the legend of William Tell, the story of the rise of Switzerland has a romance of its own, and for the lover of historical geography it has a peculiar attraction. For the State of Switzerland represents in a real sense the old middle Kingdom of Burgundy, which was itself a part of that realm of Lotharingia which was the inheritance of Charles the Great's eldest son (p. 59). It might indeed be said that the establishment of the neutrality of Belgium, Luxemburg and Switzerland represents an unconscious, and somewhat futile, attempt to recreate that old Middle Kingdom which has never been a practical reality, and lives only as a faint echo in the word Lorraine.

But the growth of Switzerland is in itself a remarkable story, and the country can claim that its existence is due to the special care of Providence. There were several moments in its career when survival seemed impossible, but Fate showed the young state a well-deserved favour.

The villages of Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden were situated in Swabia, a region dominated by the Hapsburgs: their first good fortune came, as has already been mentioned (see p. 123), when Rudolf of Hapsburg became emperor and had larger interests to consider. In 1291 the peasants of these villages formed their original league, then merely a defensive alliance: this would have availed them little if the Hapsburgs had retained the Imperial throne, but Rudolf's son was at first only a pretender to it and, seeking for allies, however small, promised the League imperial protection: at his death (1308) the Luxemburg House was glad to annoy the Hapsburgs by confirming the League's privileges. When the Bavarian House was in power, the peasants fought for it against the Hapsburgs, and showed their military skill on their own ground by winning the battle of Morgarten (1315), and the Hapsburgs withdrew their claims.

Success brought more members to the League, the first being the town of Luzern, whose accession completed the Four Forest Cantons (1330). Zurich followed twenty years later, and a new agreement in 1351 showed a real advance towards federalism. Another attempt of the Hapsburgs to assert their old rights failed,



and, indeed, resulted in the accession of two new members of the League, which in 1353 invited the powerful city of Berne to join it. A final attempt was made in 1386, but the victory of Sempach, in which the Hapsburg prince was killed, brought the struggle to an end, and his sons renounced all their feudal claims. The Eight Cantons had secured their liberty and "were able, in course of time, to extend their power, in the form of various shades of dominion and alliance, over the smaller lands in their neighbourhood" (Freeman, *Hist. Geog.*, p. 271), though no new cantons were formed for more than a hundred years. A small "middle state" had again come into being in Europe.

### *The Eastern Empire 1308-1420*

While Western Europe was occupied with these comparatively small domestic concerns, events of great importance were taking place in the East. It is true that they are almost uniformly discreditable and often shameful, but it is wrong that we should forget that it was only an accident which saved Constantinople from falling many years before it did, and perhaps only the further accident that Timour preferred to attack China which saved Europe from a great Mongolian invasion in 1402.

A few facts will show how real and close these dangers were. It is needless to remind the reader that since the tragedy of 1204 the Empire's power of resistance had been very greatly lessened: the Empire "restored" in 1261 was only a shadow of its former self: by 1360 Constantinople had been further weakened by a disastrous civil war between the Emperor John and his despicable co-regent, John Cantacuzenos, who made a bid for the support of the Turks by giving his daughter in marriage to the Sultan: the King of Serbia, Stephen Dushan (see p. 160), had taken the opportunity to seize Albania, Epirus and Thessaly and called himself Emperor of Roumania: it might have been well for Europe if he had actually conquered Constantinople, so that there would have been one great power to face the Turks, but he died in 1355, and his power dissolved.

Meanwhile the Turks had taken Gallipoli, and in 1361 had occupied most of Thrace and made Adrianople their capital. They had just put into effect the "Christian tribute" by which every Christian village was compelled each year to supply its most promising boys to be trained as Janissaries (new soldiers)—a force destined, in Gibbon's phrase, to become "the terror of the nations

and sometimes of the Sultans themselves".\* It is clear that Constantinople was at their mercy, but the Sultan Amurath preferred to turn his arms against Serbia, and the great defeat of Kossovo (1389) is still the bitterest memory of that country. He was content with making John his vassal, and forcing him to march by his side to reduce the last Christian stronghold in Asia.

If the danger from Amurath was only a possibility, that of forty years later was a grim reality. Bajazet, his successor, defeated at Nicopolis in 1396 a crusading host, led by Sigismund of Bohemia, later to be Emperor: he laid regular siege to Constantinople, and would certainly have taken it had he not been called away to meet the Mongol hosts of Timour, who inflicted on him at Angora (1402) a crushing defeat, with results depicted in Marlowe's *Tamburlaine the Great*. A further reprieve of half a century was secured for the Empire: had Christendom been able to form any coalition against the Turks at the moment, the case of the Empire would not have been desperate; but the opportunity was allowed to slip. Even so, a century later, the remorseless energy of Mahomet the Conqueror, which might well have made him master of much of Europe, had to be first employed in the taking of the city, as will be told in due course (see p. 164).

Here we need only remark that had he had Constantinople as his base at the beginning of his reign, it is far from unlikely that he would have threatened Rome itself, for, even as it was, after taking the city in 1453, he had time to conquer most of the Balkan peninsula and to reach Otranto: the Turkish menace to Europe would have been advanced by a century.

The unfulfilled possibilities of history are a tiresome subject, but it is clear that the danger was imminent both in 1361 and in 1400. The peril of a great Mongolian invasion in the latter year may seem more remote, but if Timour had preferred to attack Europe rather than China, it is impossible to say what the results might have been: in fact, he was content to make the Empire his vassal. What might have befallen Europe is shown by the experi-

\* "At first the Janissaries were a religious military order, composed of men selected for physical or mental excellence, divorced more completely than any monk from all worldly ties of birth, marriage, or profession, and encouraged to give their vigour full and unscrupulous play: subject to no law save that of unquestioning obedience to their superior officers." (*Turkey in Europe*, p. 66.) About a century after the capture of Constantinople they were allowed to marry and to enrol their sons: the tribute ceased in the seventeenth century. In 1826 the Sultan tried to reform them, but finding that impossible massacred them all.

ence of Russia, shortly to be described: there a Tartar invasion, a century and a half before Timour, had thrown the country into a state of barbarism from which it was only slowly and partially to recover.

### *Eastern Europe*

We have now to endeavour to give some sort of general picture of Eastern Europe: it will involve a large number of facts, but we will endeavour to reduce them to a minimum, though this means that the sketch must be drawn on very broad lines.

Eastern Europe is predominantly Slav: we will deal first with the one remarkable exception, *the Hungarians*, who were interposed as a Magyar state between Slavs to North, South and East. The fact that they, like the Poles, belong to the Roman Church, while the Slavs are predominantly Orthodox, adds to the peculiarity of their position, and has been a bar to co-operation. The Magyars, with their kinsmen the Huns, were believed by those who first encountered them to eat raw flesh and to vary their drink of mares' milk with the blood of their enemies: the Byzantine historians called them *Tourkoi*—a strange name for a people much of whose later history is concerned with strenuous resistance to the Ottoman invader.

Hungary had ranked as part of Latin Christendom since the beginning of the eleventh century (in which it acquired Transylvania), but its monarchy was limited in power. It suffered severely from the Tartar invasion in 1241: half a century later its native dynasty died out, and kings were found from the various Houses of Anjou, Luxemburg and Hapsburg, with the last of which their connection was to be of long endurance. It was under an Angevin king, Lewis the Great (1349–82), that the kingdom was most widely extended: he conquered Galicia (or Red Russia), Dalmatia and Bosnia, and his influence extended to what has now become the Kingdom of Roumania (i.e. Moldavia and Wallachia).

The first Turkish invasion came in 1391, and from that time till the victory of Vienna (1683) Hungary was to play its part as a Eastern bulwark of Europe, now triumphantly under Matthias Corvinus (1458–90) (see p. 176), now disastrously as at Mohacz (1526), with which tragedy the separate history of Hungary ends till Versailles (1919). But the Hungarians have never lost their identity and throughout their long association with Austria never

ceased to emphasize it. They are a strange phenomenon in Europe, but Europe has good reason to be grateful to them.

We must now turn to the Slav states, and first to the greatest of them, *Russia*. The first great event in Russian history is the establishment by the Vikings under Rurik of the state of Kiev (862). Russia, we may remark in passing, is a Scandinavian, not a Slavonic, name, but in a century the names of the rulers have become Slavonic. They were converted to Christianity about the year 1000, under the auspices of a king whose 3,500 concubines have not prevented his canonisation as a saint. In 1240 their capital was taken and destroyed by the Tartars: it is perhaps worth noting that their name Tatar was changed to Tartar to leave no doubt of their infernal origin. The Viking state of Kiev was what is known as Little Russia.

This invasion (against which the Pope and emperor, engaged in their own struggle, could give no assistance) is the second landmark in Russian history. The Tartars, it is true, passed on through Poland and into Hungary: it looked as if all Eastern Europe was doomed, when the news of their Khan's death called them home, but Russia was not relieved: the so-called "Golden Horde" remained with their capital on the Volga, and kept the Russian princes under its yoke for several centuries. It was a demoralising experience, and largely accounts for that barbarism which Peter the Great was to endeavour to repress in his subjects and occasionally to display himself. During this period the great trading state of Novgorod arose, but it, like Moscow, paid the Tartar tribute.\*

It was, indeed, by their efficiency as Tartar tax-gatherers that the princes of Moscow grew into importance, conquered Novgorod, and earned the right to give the name of Muscovy to Russia. This is the origin of Great as opposed to Little Russia, and marks the third stage of Russian history.

Meanwhile to the West another great Slav state had arisen, that of *Poland*: its greatness came about by the union, through a royal marriage (1386), of Poland and Lithuania.† Poland had been a large though ill-organised kingdom since about 1000, but had lost some territory (Pomerania and Silesia) to the Empire in the twelfth century and suffered much from the Tartars in the thirteenth. Lithuania was a still larger state to the east. The first

\* It is fortunate that Timour (see p. 156), so far from helping the "Golden Horde", ravaged their land impartially and considerably weakened their strength.

† In 1501 they were united as distinct states under a common sovereign.

effect of their union in 1386 was the recovery of West Prussia from the Teutonic knights who were also forced to do homage for East Prussia: the native Prussians disliked the rule of the Teutonic knights, who were badly beaten at Tannenberg, a name famous for a later battle. Poland had acquired a footing on the Baltic, and also much of Little Russia, as well as some ill-defined rights over the Cossacks of the Ukraine.

Poland's golden age came under the House of Jagellon (1386-1572) Cracow was adorned with fine buildings, and its university became the school of Eastern Europe in the fifteenth century. (The epoch-making work of Copernicus—*de revolutionibus orbium caelestium*—was published in 1543, the year of his death.)

But the kingdom suffered from two great weaknesses: half Lithuania belonged to the Orthodox faith, while the Poles were ardent disciples of Rome: when Latin Christianity was made the national religion, the result was continual disaffection in Lithuania, and the growth of a sentiment favouring Orthodox Russia. The other weakness came from her constitution (established in 1413 and 1453) by which the lesser nobles obtained the chief power, ultimately acquiring an individual veto on all proceedings (see p. 252). They used their power to tie the peasants to their villages, and to make noble birth indispensable for the holding of office. Poland sorely needed someone capable (to vary a famous phrase) of "knocking the heads of the nobles together, and jumbling out of them something of advantage to the country": instead, she indulged in a riotous Parliamentarianism at the very time when it was being, not without advantage, abandoned in the more fortunate West.

There for the moment we must leave Poland and Russia, remarking only how inevitable it was that Russia (besides desiring an outlet to the Baltic) should wish to regain the Russian lands in Polish possession. We will turn to the Balkans, remembering that the word "Balkan" means "mountain", and that throughout the peninsula communication, especially between East and West, is always extremely difficult.

"The glory of *Bulgaria*", as Gibbon remarks, "was confined to a narrow scope and place." We have already described the rise and fall of the first Bulgarian Empire (see p. 67), the conversion of the people by Cyril, the invention of the Cyrillic alphabet, and the rise of the Bogomil heresy (see p. 68). The second Bulgarian Empire arose in 1186, when they threw off their allegiance to

Constantinople: it reached its highest power under John Asan II (1218-41), but, as usually happens in the Balkans, its prosperity depended on a single man: on his death it rapidly declined, and a century later was reduced to complete dependence on Serbia, then ruled by Stephen Dushan, who even took the title of "Tsar of the Bulgarians". After his death Bulgaria submitted to the Turks, and their history becomes a blank, only to be recalled to European, or, at least, British, memory by the "Bulgarian atrocities" of 1876.

It is a curious fact that the Bulgars, who first crossed the Danube in the latter half of the seventh century, have lost their language but kept their name, being quietly absorbed by the Slavs whom they had conquered.

The history of *Serbia* is closely connected with that of their neighbours in Bulgaria, with whom they were constantly at war: she was nearly blotted out by the first Bulgarian Empire, but recovered in the twelfth century, and in 1195 St. Sava, "the real creator of the Serbian kingdom", crowned his brother Stephen "the first crowned king of Serbia". He acquired Bosnia and Dalmatia, which brought him into conflict with Hungary, and later kings gained at the expense of the Emperors of Constantinople.\* Her golden age begins with Stephen Dushan, the Strangler (so called from the death inflicted on his father). In spite of this unpropitious beginning he was a great ruler, a law-giver and a patron of literature. He reigned from 1336-55, established his rule over the Balkan peninsula, and dreamed of seating himself on the throne of Constantinople (see p. 155): this has been called "one of the most critical moments in European history" (*Turkey in Europe*, p. 42). He advanced on the city with 80,000 men, captured Thrace and Adrianople, but died suddenly when forty miles from his goal—possibly poisoned by the emperor whom he sought to dethrone. Had he lived, it is conceivable that Turkish progress might have been arrested, but his death involved the collapse of Serbian power, and in 1389 at the fatal battle of Kossovo—a day memorable in Eastern European history—the Serbs were utterly crushed by the Turks. The Serbs of Montenegro still wear mourning on their caps for that terrible day, and whenever the people have risen against the Turks "in revenge for Kossovo" has been

\* "The two weaknesses which mark the whole history of Serbia are the enmity of Hungary and the extraordinary propensity towards family dissension and intrigue" (*Turkey in Europe*, p. 39).

emblazoned on their banners. In spite of the efforts of John Hunyadi, which delayed the event (see p. 164), Serbia in 1458 was incorporated in the Turkish state, and "this brave, poetic, careless, frivolous people" disappears from the main stream of European history till its glorious achievements in 1914-15.

Space does not allow us to deal with the romantic history of *Montenegro*, the only Balkan country which has never owned the suzerainty of the Sultan, but readers may care to be reminded of Mr. Gladstone's "deliberate opinion" that "the traditions of Montenegro exceed in glory those of Marathon and Thermopylae and all the war traditions of the world" (speech in 1895, Miller, *The Balkans*, p. 353).

## The Fifteenth Century

"The age of chivalry is gone: that of sophisters and economists and calculators has succeeded": if Burke had spoken these words in the fifteenth century instead of the eighteenth they would have been of much more general application, for in that century, in three of the great countries of Europe, England, France and Spain, extremely shrewd and not over-scrupulous kings were engaged in storing up wealth and power to be used or squandered by the generations which followed.

It is not that Henry VII or Louis XI or Ferdinand were less "religious" men than Richard Coeur de Lion or Philip Augustus—the contrary would be true of at least one of them—but the chivalrous instinct which took men crusading was unmistakably dead. The wars fought in this period against the infidel were wars of naked self-preservation, and there are few pictures more pathetic or more characteristic of the century than that (painted by Pintoricchio at Siena) of the dying Pope Pius II waiting on the shore at Ancona for the crusading vessels which never came (see p. 183).

There was naturally a certain similarity between the methods employed in all three countries, nor are their annals very exciting reading: it is more interesting to consider why Italy and Germany again failed to follow their example. In the case of Italy there was no lack of able men, but they were either devoted to the interests of a particular state—the most notable and successful of them being Cosimo dei Medici, Pater Patriae, at Florence—or, if they were Popes, to the interests of their own particular families, of which the Borgia clan is the most notorious. In Germany there was, in theory, a man responsible for the whole country, the emperor, but neither the optimistic Frederic III nor his son Maximilian was the man to turn theory into practice, or to surmount the vast difficulties of his position.

There is one exception (at the close of our period) to the rule suggested above that the century is one of the acquisition of power rather than the use of it. It is one of the ironies of history that Louis XI should have had a reckless adventurer of a son,



Charles VIII, who preferred to grasp the shadow rather than the substance. His invasion of Italy in 1494, followed by that of his successor Louis XII in 1499, marks the beginnings of a policy which was to cost France and Italy dear in the next century.

We shall have in this period to deal with the attempt, which on paper looked so near to success, to re-create a great middle kingdom of Burgundy: had Louis XI and Charles the Bold had each other's cards to play, the map of Europe might well have taken a different shape.

But events of greater importance than the shaping of particular kingdoms were taking place in this century: Gutenberg printed the Mazarin Bible in 1456, and ninety-eight editions of the Bible had been issued before the century ended. By that time Columbus had landed for the first time in the West Indies (1492), and Vasco da Gama, six years later, had sailed to India from Lisbon. The young, powerful kings of the sixteenth century were to have new and unexpected forces with which to contend, and new continents over which to extend their rivalry. The final fall of Constantinople in 1453 was a fitting judgment on a cynical century.

It will be well, before we consider Western Europe, to deal briefly with the final collapse of the Eastern Empire, for the West, or, at least, Germany, had to face the avalanche which the breaking of that barrier at last let loose. It is a sad story, discreditable to all Christians, though redeemed, so far as Constantinople itself is concerned, by a brief glimmer of heroism at the last.

### *The Eastern Empire 1420-53*

The last years of the Eastern Empire can be briefly told. No effective use was made of the twenty years of respite which the incursion of Timour had won (see p. 156), nor is it easy to see what could have been done by Constantinople's own resources. Europe had refused to help: in the first years of the century the emperor had visited the West, going as far as Paris and London, and had met with no response. By 1422 he was again a vassal of the Turks, after a siege in which cannon was for the first time used against the city's walls.

In 1438 the emperor, John VIII, made another appeal in person to the Council of Ferrara, and next year at the Council of Florence he took the desperate step of being received into the Roman Church, which brought him no real help from Rome, and only

alienated the loyalty of his own subjects.\* A glimmer of hope shone from Serbia, whose king had bought Hungarian aid by ceding the fortress of Belgrade. The great Hunyadi Janos fought some successful campaigns and made an advantageous treaty, but the Pope persuaded the Christians to repudiate it, and they paid for their ill faith by a crushing disaster at Varna (1444).

The last Christian Emperor, Constantine XI, succeeded in 1448, and Mahomet (known as the Conqueror) in 1451. He at once prepared for the siege. The Pope could only send a few hundred soldiers of fortune: Genoa and Venice, which could have done more, sent only two or three galleys: Constantine's own regular troops amounted to only about 4,000 men, and his appeals for volunteers were met with apathy, since he, like his brother, had forsaken the Greek Church.

What man could do, he did, and at first met with some success at sea; but on April 22nd, 1453, Mahomet, by a triumph of engineering, transported seventy or eighty vessels on wooden tram-lines from a distance of more than a mile over an appreciable hill, and launched them in the Golden Horn: the inner sea-face of the city was now open to attack. Even so, two attacks were beaten off, but on May 29th the Sultan brought up his reserves and the end came: the Turks passed through a gap which can still be seen in the walls, the emperor died fighting, and Constantinople was lost.

It is said that, as Mahomet rode through the Hippodrome, he rose in his stirrups and smote off with his mace the head of a snake on a brazen monument which stood there. If so, it was a symbolic act, for the monument was that three-headed brazen serpent which the Greeks had dedicated at Delphi 1,900 years before, when they had defeated the Persians at Plataea. Asia had come again.

### *The Turks*

It is a mistake to regard the Turks as introducing "barbarism" into Europe: there was plenty of barbarity in Constantinople in the degenerate days of Andronicus or the Angeli or in the Balkans under rulers like Vlad the Impaler of Wallachia: it may be maintained that in morals and humanity they were quite on a level

\* In the Riccardi palace of the Medici in Florence the Emperor John figures, with the young Lorenzo the Magnificent, as one of the three Magi in the famous painting by Benozzo Gozzoli.

with the Greeks, Slavs, Albanians and Roumanians. Nor were they without a culture of their own: their minarets are one of the glories of Constantinople, and their literature is not to be altogether despised.

But it is in their capacity of rulers that we have to consider them here, and in that respect it must be confessed that they proved a lamentable failure. The explanation is given by a writer \* who pays full tribute to their good qualities, their courage, their courtesy and their natural dignity. It is that the Turk is by nature a nomad, carrying into the government of occupied countries that same irresponsible selfishness which most of us display on a railway journey: the Turk "pays no attention to the interests of the territory he occupies: he makes himself comfortable in his own way in whatever shelter he finds: he builds nothing but what is immediately necessary, and repairs nothing at all. Why should he? He will pass on somewhere else and take another house."

This is why he reclaims no barren land, and plants no vineyards: "on the contrary, he has turned wooded countries into deserts by his improvident habit of cutting down trees for firewood, and making no attempt to plant others in their place". He is fundamentally lazy, for all his enterprise as a soldier and his laborious work as a peasant: his ideal is idleness in comfort: "he is too proud to do many things; too stupid to do others", and his religion has inspired a fatalism which suggests that all effort is useless. This same fatalism has helped to make him a superb soldier and "his history is purely military". As an administrator he is naturally a failure: for this purpose (as he dislikes all occupations except warfare and agriculture), he employs the services of others. His language, which expresses thought in an order opposite to our own, does not readily lend itself to business,† and the Turk "looks upon writing as a special art in which it would be highly indecorous to employ ordinary language": hence came the opportunity of the educated Greeks of the cities, who became prosperous and powerful; but the Serbs and Bulgarians, and indeed the Slav subjects of the Turk as a whole, became "a helpless, friendless, nameless peasantry whose only function was to

\* *Turkey in Europe by Odysseus*—a brilliant and most entertaining book by Sir Charles Eliot.

† For example, the sentence "We are coming to Stamboul on the steamer Vulcan of the Lloyd Company running between Varna and the capital" would read in Turkish "Capital and Varna between running Lloyd of Company of Vulcan steamer on Stamboul coming are we".

provide taxes and plunder" for a government always corrupt and not infrequently cruel.

The shortcomings of Balkan states in our own day are easily accounted for, and it is the Turk who must bear the blame. It will be of the utmost interest to see how far the recent reforms have changed the national character.

But great as was the shock which the fall of Constantinople gave to Europe, its ultimate and unforeseen effects were more momentous still. The Mediterranean ceased to be the great highway of European traffic and its trade was no longer to be the profitable privilege of Genoese and Venetians; the future was for those who could venture on to wider seas: it is significant that Columbus, a Genoese by birth, sailed under the flag of one of those Atlantic powers whose day was now to come.

The mariner's compass had been invented by the end of the fourteenth century, and King John of Portugal (died 1433) was the first sovereign to encourage his subjects in its use. His son, Prince Henry the Navigator (1394-1460) was a great pioneer in African exploration, urged on not only by a desire for the fabulous wealth of the Gold or Guinea Coast, but by a real wish to bring the Gospel to the negroes of the Niger. John II, who reigned from 1481-95, took up the plan of circumnavigating Africa, and the "Cape of Storms" rounded by Bartholomew Diaz in 1496 was to become the Cape of Good Hope: Camoen's epic deservedly sang the glories of Vasco da Gama and of Portugal. Portuguese rule expanded till it ultimately stretched from Brazil to Bombay, and Spain (see p. 173) was equally adventurous. England, destined to be the chief beneficiary of the new age, was no longer a remote island on the outskirts of Europe, but one called by its position to take a leading part both in discovery and in trade.

We will now return to the countries of the West, and will deal first with England.

### *England 1420-1509*

We left the infant Henry VI acknowledged King of England and France. The service once done by the iniquitous John was in this century performed by the saintly Joan of Arc. It is no disparagement of her wonderful achievement to say that the English rule of France could in no case have been long-enduring: it depended on our alliance with the Burgundian princes, and that came to an end in 1435. Again, it depended on some unity in our manage-

ment of affairs, and it was now our turn to suffer from that enmity between great houses which had paralysed France: York and Lancaster were competing for power long before they were openly competing for the throne: the result of these two factors was that by 1453 Calais was the only place in France under English rule. From the French point of view, the situation is admirably summed up by Mons. Lavissee "Hors de France, les *Goddam!* Ils sortirent de France et la France fut" (*Vue générale*, p. 88).\*

The Wars of the Roses are a domestic affair, and their details need not detain us. In a real sense they had begun in the reign of Richard II, when the Lancastrians took the throne, and their course shows the many royal and semi-royal families in England competing for power. As they were fought with much bitterness over a long period, as fortune frequently changed, and as neither side in the hour of victory spared its opponents, the result was (very fortunately for England) greatly to reduce the number of noble families capable of raising disturbance.

It is not a pleasant chapter in the history of England, but our good fortune was again evident when, at the battle of Bosworth (1485), what was little more than a skirmish gave a Welsh gentleman, Henry Tudor, with a somewhat shadowy claim to the throne,† the victory over Richard III, who (though apparently not the arch-villain of our early beliefs) could not conceivably have given peace and unity to the country.

It is interesting to observe that London, which was rapidly growing in importance, remained neutral throughout the struggle: Edward IV's throne was, paradoxically, strengthened by the amount of his debts, for those who had lent him money saw no chance of repayment if he fell. It should be noted that in his reign Caxton set up his printing press at Westminster.

Henry VII is not, after Bosworth, a romantic figure, but it is difficult to exaggerate the debt which England owes him. He gave the country a quarter of a century of peace, and so general was the desire for that peace that he was able, without a standing army, steadily to repress the various risings which threatened him. The central fact of his reign is the growth of that upper middle class which has played so large a part in English life for more than four hundred years. Henry rightly feared the old aristocracy and was anxious to work as much as possible through the Justices of the

\* Bernard Shaw's great play, *Saint Joan*, apart from its other merits, shows how the names Englishman and Frenchman were just coming into popular use.

† His mother would have had the better right, if a queen could have been accepted.

Peace who, besides having no dangerous ambitions, had the further advantage of requiring no pay.

For he had the unromantic virtue of thrift, and used what may be called a very competent civil service to get money for the Crown, fining heavily those who trespassed on its rights: this, like his suppression of "Livery and Maintenance" (by which what were really small private armies had been maintained) was popular with the country as a whole, for its first interest was the maintenance of order. The growth of the cloth trade, especially in Norfolk, was increasing the national wealth (as the great churches in East Anglia testify) and "enclosures" of common land, though they might press heavily on the poor, were helping the yeoman farmer to improve agriculture.

But Henry saw to it that the new class which was rising did its duty to the country. The Privy Council kept the Justices of the Peace up to the mark, and the "Star Chamber", later to be so much abused in every sense of the word, was in his day a very efficient instrument for defending the weak against the strong, and asserting over all alike the supremacy of the law; though, as a "prerogative court", it was a rival of those where the Common Law was administered. Parliament in his day did not play a very important part, for the country was well content with the way in which government was being carried on. The broad and simple fact is that Henry understood his people and that they came to trust him.

By the end of this period the power both of the country and of the throne had enormously increased. The difference is immense between the showy Kingdom of England and France which Henry V bequeathed and the English Kingdom which Henry VIII inherited, and the change is very largely due to his father. Circumstances had no doubt helped royal power all over Europe, for gunpowder enabled kings to maintain artillery which could master the baronial castle: and royal marriages were becoming more than ever an instrument of policy. With his eldest son married to the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella, and a daughter married to the King of Scotland, Henry might feel that he was well secured against our old enemies the French. Nor should it be forgotten that he had established peace in Ireland.

This short account has done little justice to the difficulties which he had to face: though he cannot be called an attractive

character, he had done great service to his country. ("For his Pleasures", says Bacon, "there is no Newes of them.")

### *France 1420-94*

Louis XI had a harder task than Henry VII, though one of a similar kind, and achieved it with equal success. In one respect he had the advantage, for before he came to the throne in 1461, Charles VII, who reigned from 1422 (he regained Paris in 1436), had with the help of able ministers—he was known as "le bien servi"—restored order, and in particular reformed the army. Louis, who had not been on speaking terms with his father for ten years and had been ruling Dauphiné as an independent principality, inherited from him a standing army of considerable strength.

His methods were tortuous in the extreme, and sometimes brought him to the verge of disaster: that he was always successful in the end seems to have been due both to his abnormal cunning and to his readiness to bribe lavishly when the occasion demanded it, as, for example, when Edward IV, who had invaded France in support of Charles the Bold in 1475, accepted a large sum of money to return to England. It should be added that he never hesitated to break any promise, however recently it had been made.

It is worth while for the student of history to look closely at his relations with the greatest and most dangerous of his vassals, Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, for Charles had schemes which, but for Louis, might possibly have succeeded, to re-create a great "middle kingdom" reaching from the Zuyder Zee to the Mediterranean, with results on European history which would clearly have been momentous. It is interesting to consider what justification he had for any such hopes, and the reasons, political and personal, which caused them to come to nothing. In the early part of his career—he became duke in 1467—Charles conspired with other French vassals to oppose Louis' design of making France a compact kingdom, fighting no doubt against the spirit of the age and also against a most skilful diplomatist. Louis, by one means or another, conquered, propitiated or disposed of the others, and Charles was left (with the exception of distant Brittany) the only duke who could claim any independence. It was at this point, in 1472, that he turned his attention Eastward, resolved that, sooner than be a docile French vassal, he would

not be a Frenchman at all. The rest of his life was devoted to his greater scheme, a scheme which, however much we may think it would have helped the peace of Europe, was not likely to commend itself to the King of France, especially to such a king as Louis.

The Duke of Burgundy, we should remember, held a position not only strong but unique. He was the most important of French vassals, holding from the French Crown the Duchy of Burgundy, and the Counties of Flanders and Artois, but he also held under the emperor the Duchy of Brabant, the Counties of Burgundy and Holland, and a dozen smaller duchies and counties. No prince in Europe held so many rich and prosperous cities, and Burgundy was as rich in men as Flanders in money. He was of the blood royal of France, closely connected with the royal house of England, by far the most powerful of the princes of the Empire, and not without a reasonable hope of becoming emperor himself. It was inevitable that he should dream of reviving that Kingdom of Burgundy which had in various forms existed for a time—or the still older Kingdom of Lotharingia. Lower Lorraine (or Brabant) was his by inheritance: Upper Lorraine he at least temporarily conquered: he was not without hopes of gains in Saxony and in Provence.

The political reasons which led to his failure were various: in the first place his dominions had no organic unity, the Burgundies and the Low Countries lying in two masses separated by the land of free cities and ecclesiastical princes, which could not be peacefully acquired; secondly, there was the opposition of the Emperor Frederic III (see p. 175) who, a confirmed procrastinator at all times, showed in this matter that, when his heart was in the work, he could procrastinate with genius;\* the third and most serious obstacle was Louis, whose money, combined with not unreasonable fears as to the duke's future intentions, caused Switzerland (still known as the Old League of High Germany) to declare war on Charles—the war in which he was defeated and killed at Nancy in 1476.

The personal reasons for his failure are equally clear. Though his character was above the level of his contemporaries, for he was austere in morals and had a greater reputation for justice and

\* There was a ridiculous scene when, having come to Trier to crown Charles next day, he departed secretly by night, leaving the Duke to carry home his unwanted crown and sceptre.



good faith than most princes of his time, he had not the art of winning affection, and died hated by his own soldiers and lamented by none. As a politician he was restless, and though his ambitions were not unreasonable they were so numerous that they allowed his subjects no peace. His success might have saved Europe many sorrows: his failure opened the way to a struggle between France and the German powers which has lasted to this day.

Louis at once seized the Duchy and County of Burgundy, Artois, Arras and the Somme towns: his Swiss money had been well expended and he made a handsome profit. But Mary, Charles's daughter and heiress, gave her hand to Maximilian of Austria, the emperor's son, and the contest between East and West at once began. It is no accident that so many of the great battles of Europe have been fought in territory once held by Charles the Bold. When Louis died in 1483, no part of modern France except Brittany remained which was not directly subject to the throne,\* and the monarchy was absolute: the Estates General was summoned only once in his reign. In view of his achievements he cannot but be described as a great king, but it is not mere insular prejudice which rejoices in the poetic justice which gave him a son as dissimilar in character and intellect as Charles VIII (1483-98). As his Italian adventure in 1494 was his chief (and most disastrous) contribution to French history, we will postpone any account of him till we come to deal with Italian affairs (see p. 184).

### *Spain 1420-1516*

It might seem at first sight that Ferdinand's task of making Spain into a compact kingdom was easier than that set to Henry VII or Louis XI. He had only, we might think, as heir to the throne of Aragon, to marry Isabella of Castile and the union would be accomplished. In a sense this is true. As a result of their marriage (1469) all the Peninsula, except Portugal, Navarre and the Kingdom of Granada, was united under their joint rule ten years later: Granada, after a ten years' war, was taken in 1492: Spanish Navarre was conquered (though not till twenty years later), and by marrying their eldest daughter to the King of Portugal they might hope to prepare the way for its absorption in course of time.

\* Artois and Franche Comté did not finally become French till 1659 and 1678 respectively.

But to think thus would be to forget the great difficulties which lay in the strong "particularism" of both Castile and Aragon and the weakness of the Crown in both countries. It is significant that the King of Spain has always been known as *Rey de las Espanas*—King of the Spains. Though for a time they were successful, the union remained only personal, and when Isabella died in 1504 Castile refused to accept Ferdinand as Regent for his daughter. They were indeed singularly unfortunate in their dynastic plans: their only son died young, the only child of the Portuguese queen died as an infant, and their only remaining daughter (besides the hapless Catherine) went mad with grief after the early death of her husband (Philip, son of the Emperor Maximilian). So it came about that, instead of founding a dynasty to rule a united Spain, they left only two grandsons, the elder of whom, Charles, brought up in Flanders, and the predestined heir of his other grandfather the emperor, was not likely to give Spain the first place in his heart.

In fact, after Ferdinand's death (1516), it was not for more than thirty years that Spain had a king whose first interests were in that country. The result was that Spanish divisions, not originally more serious than those of France, have never to this day been abolished—which will be regarded as a tragedy by all those who share the nineteenth-century belief that large countries are invariably better and happier than small ones, and also hold (despite the evidence of Portugal), that the peninsula was meant by nature to be one.

But what Ferdinand and Isabella could do, they did. They suppressed the nobility of Castile by an alliance with the cities, they curbed the liberties of the nobles of Aragon, they strengthened the royal power by a close alliance with the Church, and by annexing to the Crown the great military Orders, a relic of crusading days. Ferdinand carried war across the strait of Gibraltar, annexing Algiers, Oran and Tripoli, and successfully asserted Spanish claims in Italy, as we shall see later, while at home the central government gained much in power.

It was not for nothing that they were given the title of "the Catholic Kings": with the help of the great Cardinal Ximenes they reformed the Spanish Church, paying special attention to learning: it was Ximenes who caused the famous Polyglot Bible to be published, and it is largely due to their exertions that Protestantism never obtained a hold in Spain, and that the future Catholic reaction centred there.

It cannot be denied that their zeal caused them to use unfortunate instruments: the Inquisition (characteristically popular in Spain) flourished under the patronage of Isabella, whose devotion to its methods is the only blot on a noble character. She warmly approved the cruel expulsion of the Jews, and the disgraceful violation of the terms promised to the Moors at Granada, who, some ten years later, were given the alternative of baptism or exile.

It is more pleasant to recall her patronage of Columbus, who after unsuccessful application to the King of Portugal (then pre-occupied with the circumnavigation of Africa), found favour at the Spanish court. His first expedition in 1492 took him to the Bahamas: his second, next year, to Jamaica, and the third reached the continent at Venezuela. (It is interesting to remember that his brother might have persuaded Henry VII to support their plan and anticipate the Spanish kings, had he not fallen among pirates in the English Channel: Cabot, another Genoese, in Henry's pay, reached North America, near the mouth of the St. Lawrence, in 1497.)

The result of these and similar discoveries was the famous Bull of Alexander VI in 1493, which divided "the New World" between Spain and Portugal with results which were to be manifest in the next century. The two countries, and particularly Portugal, well deserved a reward, though it was not long before this grant was regarded as excessive.

Ferdinand died in 1516, hesitating to the last whether to divide his lands between his two grandsons, and give Italy to Ferdinand the younger, but the advice of Ximenes, and jealousy of France, prevailed, and the young Charles, the heir of Maximilian and in a real sense of Charles the Bold, became also the possessor of all the land ruled or claimed by Spain.

### *Germany to 1519*

We have kept Germany and Italy to the last because it was the emperors of the one and the Popes of the other who had most to do with the Reformation which was to break out in the next century and must soon become our main theme. As we shall see, it was the personality of one emperor, Charles V, and several Popes, which determined its course: we have now to look at their immediate predecessors.

The fifteenth century saw the consolidation of the Kingdoms of

France, Spain and England. It is natural to inquire why nothing comparable was accomplished in Germany, and why we see instead nothing but the amazing growth of the House of Hapsburg: so that in 1519 its representative, Charles V, ruled at one time Austria, the Low Countries, Naples, Sicily, Franche Comté and Spain, while his brother Ferdinand held Hungary and Bohemia: when we add to all this the indefinite powers which as emperor he wielded in Germany, and the still more indefinite rights which the Pope had granted to Spain in the New World, it will appear that he bestrode Europe like a Colossus. We shall have later to see why this immense power was so ineffective: for the moment we have to consider how the situation arose, and in particular its effect upon Germany.

It must be repeated that the failure to achieve German unity (which might have proved either a blessing or a curse to Europe) was mainly due to the legacy of the Empire: Frederic II, in his endeavour to assert his rights as emperor, had fatally weakened his domestic power as a German king, and any ambitious emperor (like Maximilian) was certain to be distracted from German affairs by the hope of asserting imperial rights in Italy. Secondly, the failure was due to the desire of the German magnates to keep the emperor helpless: they chose by preference some petty prince, and were ready even to accept a foreigner in preference to a German. The Hapsburgs, originally a comparatively insignificant family on what we should call the Swiss border, were chosen precisely because of their weakness in 1273. They achieved power, not because they were abnormally acquisitive, but partly by good fortune and partly by skilful manoeuvres, especially in the matrimonial field. It was not till 1438 that they secured what was practically a monopoly of the Empire (see p. 152), and by that time its authority had been fatally weakened by Charles IV of Luxemburg, 1347-78 (whose Golden Bull "confessed and legalised the independence of the Electors and the powerlessness of the crown" (Bryce, p. 225)), and discredited by his mad and murderous successor Wenzel, 1370-1400 (who roasted his cook on the spit as a punishment for an ill-prepared dinner).

In the fifteenth century, when the Hapsburgs came into final possession, the imperial situation was irretrievable, and the German situation very difficult. Bohemia was torn with religious wars: Poland was asserting itself against the Teutonic knights: the

Scandinavian Kingdoms were threatening to dominate the Baltic; the foundation of the "Old League of High Germany" (Switzerland), though it was nominally loyal to the Empire, was really a weakening of its strength; and, finally, the Turkish menace, both before and after the fall of Constantinople in 1453, threatened the whole of Eastern Europe.

In such circumstances it would have required a great genius to do anything effective for German unity, and the two emperors whose reigns cover most of the period, Frederic III (1440-93) and Maximilian (1493-1519), were in different ways ideally unfitted for the task. Frederic, a torpid man of peace and quiet, was sustained throughout his long reign by a placid optimism which excused him from any exertion; his strength was to sit still \*: Maximilian, an attractive, lovable, impracticable man of dreams (one of them was that he might himself become Pope), was full of energy, and not without good ideas, but it was a restless energy, often ill-directed, and some of his ideas centred round the phantom of imperial rights in Italy.

This rapid summary may be enough to account for the absence of a strong German kingdom: what we see instead is the growth of a strong Hapsburg House. For many years it was to play a great part in Europe, but its qualities are hard to define: the most striking would seem to be a tenacity which holds fast to a single idea, though the ideas may vary: for Ferdinand II the obsession was with the Counter-Reformation: for Maria Theresa with Silesia: for Joseph II with liberal reform: until at last in Francis Joseph I it passes into a mere stubbornness, refusing to learn and content merely to exist—a man well fitted to write the epitaph of five centuries of Hapsburg rule.

We must now turn to a somewhat fuller account of German affairs in this century, and will look first at the troubles which arose in Bohemia.† Huss was summoned before the Council of Constance, condemned for heresy and burnt (1415); for such "reformers" as were at the Council feared to be involved in heresy, and the Emperor Sigismund, who had given him a safe conduct, was alarmed at the theory that mortal sin in Popes, prelates or priests automatically forfeited their office: this came

\* Frederic, "sitting at home gardening and catching little birds" when the news of the fall of Constantinople arrived, recalls Pepys' story of Charles II hunting a moth when the Dutch fleet was in the Thames.

† The complicated history of this period will only be intelligible with the help of the genealogical table on p. 378.

perilously near Wycliffe's doctrine that "dominion is founded on grace", and might press hardly on a "graceless" emperor.

This judicial murder raised a storm in Bohemia: the "Hussites" became a strong party demanding various reforms, and in particular that laymen should be allowed to receive the Communion in both kinds (hence their name Utraquists). Their leader, Ziska,\* in three campaigns (1420-23) drove the Germans from Bohemia, and a still worse disaster befell them next year: after twelve years the attempt to suppress them by force was abandoned. Their claim was allowed by the Council of Basel: the extremists, who were still unsatisfied, were defeated by the more moderate party, and the Emperor Sigismund at last acknowledged as king in Bohemia (1436). His successor, Albert II, the real founder of the Hapsburg dynasty, was still fighting for the Bohemian Crown when he died, to be succeeded by Frederic III, and at this point the Bohemian troubles merge in those arising from Hungary.

Sigismund, the last Emperor of the Luxemburg House, had secured the throne of Hungary by marriage, and the Hapsburg who succeeded was accepted as being his son-in-law: on his death, in 1440, the Hungarian choice fell on the King of Poland, who married his widow: but he too died four years later in battle with the Turks, and both Hungary and Bohemia chose as king the posthumous son who had been born to her first (Hapsburg) husband. They chose two different regents to act for him: John Hunyadi for Hungary and George Podiebrad for Bohemia, with a sublime disregard for the rights of the poor Emperor Frederic, who was nominally his cousin's guardian.

The two governors quarrelled, though the quarrel was composed for a time in order to effect the brilliant relief of Belgrade from Mahomet the Conqueror (1456). This achievement, in which some of the old crusading spirit was shown, cost the life of John Hunyadi, and the boy king died next year. George Podiebrad was now made King of Bohemia, and Hunyadi's son Matthias, King of Hungary: both were excellent rulers, but they differed in religion, the Bohemian being a Hussite: Hungary, with the papal blessing, attacked Bohemia, throwing it thereby into the arms of Poland, whose prince became its king in 1471.

Of all these affairs, which deprived the Hapsburg emperors of

\* Ziska was "one of the great soldiers of the world's history: the first man to make artillery a manoeuvrable arm and to handle cavalry, infantry and artillery in efficient tactical combination" (Fortescue, I, 81).

much which their predecessors had held, Frederic was for thirty years an interested but ineffective observer: the situation became even worse when Matthias of Hungary turned his arms against him and drove him from his capital of Vienna. But the old gentleman, even when driven to wander from one monastery to another, retained his constitutional optimism, and the imperial Micawber was justified in the end in his faith in the mystic letters AEIOU, variously interpreted as *Austriae est Imperare orbi universo* or *Alles Erdreich ist Oesterreich untertan*. The luck of the Hapsburgs was now to assert itself again, and characteristically by a matrimonial alliance. Maximilian, his son, in 1477 married Mary of Burgundy, heiress of Charles the Bold, and in 1486 was elected King of the Romans: furthermore, when the Polish-Bohemian king became also King of Hungary in 1490, he was induced to sign a treaty providing that if and when his male line was extinguished his German territories should pass to the Hapsburgs—which, in fact, occurred within the next forty years. But, gratifying as this result must have been to Frederic's amiable ghost, it will have become clear that in his lifetime he had neither the ability nor the power to do much for Germany. He died in 1493, a better servant of the Hapsburgs than of the Empire.

Maximilian (1493–1519) was a very different man, as fond of action as his father was of repose; but he suffered from the same political limitations, and, on the whole, pursued the same end—the aggrandisement of the Hapsburg House. So far as the Empire was concerned, it only served to give his dreams a wider range and to distract his thoughts from Germany to Italy. But he did make a real attempt to secure some unity in Germany, and was not wholly unsuccessful. A Landfriede, forbidding private wars, was proclaimed, and an Imperial Central Tribunal set up: there were some (notably Archbishop Berchtold of Mainz) who wanted to go farther, but the emperor was as unwilling to have his prerogatives curtailed as the Estates were to leave him unfettered. Had Maximilian been ready to concentrate on making Germany a strong centralised state, he might conceivably have accomplished it, but he was too volatile, and was at least equally interested in his hereditary Hapsburg dominions and also in those questions of Italian foreign policy, from which Charles IV had hoped to save the Empire (see p. 152). Moreover, he was perpetually hampered by that shortness of money which won him the name of Maximilian the Penniless. He was a man of considerable gifts and much

personal charm, but too superficial and too easily distracted to act the part of a Louis XI or a Henry VII.

Still, it is only fair to remember the success which, as a Hapsburg, he achieved. By his marriage he had secured much of the inheritance of Charles the Bold, the County of Burgundy, Flanders and Artois, holding the latter two nominally as a fief of the King of France: by marrying his son Philip to the heiress of Ferdinand and Isabella he prepared the way for the colossal inheritance of his grandson Charles, born in 1500. There was much truth in the old jest that Austria won by weddings what others won by war.\* We have spoken of Maximilian's marriage and that of his son, but, indeed, whenever a dynasty seemed likely to end in the female line there was a Hapsburg bridegroom chivalrously ready—and indeed anxious—to shoulder the burden, and Mars did not refuse to come to the help of Venus: when her plans for the peaceful acquisition of Bohemia and Hungary seemed for the moment to have failed (in 1457), with the death of Ladislas Postumus, he was ready with an alternative solution, and the death of the king of both countries at the battle of Mohacs (1526) found prepared a husband (Ferdinand I) for the heiress who was to bring them both into the Hapsburg House.† His father and he had builded better than they knew, and the Hapsburgs, with one frontier facing France and the other the Turk, well placed on the Mediterranean, the Atlantic and the Channel, became the central fact in the history of Europe.‡

It should not be forgotten that Maximilian's lifetime coincides with the German Renaissance, which he deserves credit for encouraging. Printing was first a German art, and bookbinding went with it: the names of Albert Dürer and Vischer are the most famous among the artists and craftsmen who, with architects and sculptors, enriched Germany towards the end of the fifteenth century.

\* *Bella gerant alii: tu, felix Austria, nube.*

† Those who wish to study the process in detail should refer to the genealogical table on p. 378, where the opportunity is taken to give more facts of Bohemian and Hungarian history.

‡ In estimating the achievement of the House of Hapsburg, we must never forget that there were other German houses both powerful and ambitious: the Wittelsbachs held both Bavaria and the Palatinate of the Rhine; the House of Wettin (from the elder branch of which the House of Windsor descends) had held the electorate of Saxony since 1423; the Hohenzollerns, a Nuremberg family, had obtained the Electorate of Brandenburg in 1415, but were not to become really powerful till they acquired the Duchy of Prussia by inheritance two centuries later.



## CHAPTER XIII

### The Fifteenth Century (*continued*)

#### *Italy to 1494*

We postponed the consideration of Italian affairs in the fourteenth century, and space forbids us to discuss them in detail. As we then said, it was the age of "despots and republics": some of the despots we shall meet later and one of the republics in Venice, but we must leave without description the Houses of Scala in Verona, Carrara in Padua, Este in Ferrara, and Gonzaga in Mantua; nor can we do more than mention briefly the short-lived republic which Rienzi, "the tribune of the people", established in 1437 in Rome, though his dream of an Italian Federation of despots and republics, under the supremacy of Rome but independent alike of emperor and Pope, was a striking breach with the mediaeval tradition. He and Petrarch (1304-74)—the first person, it is said, to have climbed a mountain for pleasure, and the first modern to declare that Italy was "the fairest country under heaven"—were both inspired by the ancient glories of Rome, and both in their different ways were apostles of Italian unity.

We must hurry on to the fifteenth century—the quattrocento—that marvellous flowering time of human genius. As has been said, it was in the cities that it showed itself, and this is perhaps the right place to emphasise the debt which Europe owes to its cities—pre-eminently in Italy and in the Netherlands—both for their splendid achievements in the arts and for their service as a forcing-house for ideas. The Greeks said "a great book is a great evil": they might with some reason have said the same of "a great state". There was no movement towards general unity in Italy, but for some forty years (1454-94) there was something in the nature of a general alliance between the five great states of Milan, Venice, Florence, Naples and the Papacy. Our period is sharply divided by the tragedy of 1494, which shattered any hopes that this alliance would continue and develop. We have therefore first to look at these states as they were before that disastrous event.\*

\* Throughout this section much is owed to *Italy, Mediaeval and Modern* (Clarendon Press).

*Milan.*—In 1402 Gian Galeazzo Visconti died, having won for himself the rank of a Prince of the Empire, and for Milan the rule of all North Italy. He was a typical Italian despot who, having obtained his position by murder, gave his state peace and prosperity and was a patron of arts and letters, besides beginning Milan Cathedral and the Certosa: he is by no means the only example of a man who obtained power shamefully and used it well. His elder son did not long survive him, and the younger, who died in 1447, left only an illegitimate daughter. She married a condottiere, Francesco Sforza, who, and his sons Galeazzo Maria and Ludovico, carried on the Visconti tradition, improving education, irrigating the countryside and beautifying the city in every way: Ludovico, in particular, employed Bramante as an architect and brought Leonardo da Vinci to Milan. But this same Ludovico (known from his dark complexion as Il Moro) had only acquired power at the expense of his nephew the rightful duke, who had married a Neapolitan princess, so that his usurpation led to friction with Naples. This was the situation at Milan as the century drew to its close.

*Venice.*—We have hitherto seen the Venetians, in their dealings with Constantinople, in a somewhat unattractive light, nor is it to be denied that they had always a keen eye to commercial advantage: that is why so many ports in the eastern Mediterranean display the Venetian Lion. We may forgive them, perhaps, in view of the good use which they made of their wealth, in creating the most beautiful city in Europe: St. Mark's had been standing since 1085. They made good use of their power in other ways too, and under a close aristocratic government gave their people strong and efficient rule: the Doges, said Petrarch, were taught that they were "leaders, not lords, nay, not even leaders, but honoured servants of the state".

It was this internal strength which gave them the victory in the fourteenth century, though only after a hard struggle, over their trade rivals the Genoese. As they began to be a mainland power, they inevitably came into conflict with Milan for the rule of North Italy after Gian Galeazzo's death, and the war lasted for half a century: by 1451 the frontiers of Venice stretched half-way across Lombardy.

She was well served by her mercenary generals, such as Colleone, whose magnificent equestrian statue testifies to his

loyalty and to her sharp practice.\* That statue, many of the palaces on the Grand Canal, the Doges' palace, and at least one splendid church (Santa Maria dei Miracoli) show what Venice could do in architecture, as Bellini showed what her painters could achieve. (Carpaccio, Tintoretto and Titian belong to a later generation.)

With all her many merits and her incomparable beauty, Venice was a self-regarding state, loved by her subjects, hated by her neighbours. She had no regard for the interests of Italy as a whole, and the foreign invasion of 1494 merely seemed to her to offer the opportunity to fish in troubled waters.

*Florence*, a city which had long been troubled with intestine feuds, felt, in the days of Gian Galeazzo, the need for a strong central government, and by great good fortune fell in 1434 under the control of Cosimo dei Medici, a wealthy citizen who was content to exercise the reality of power and careless of the name under which he held it. The method was not original, for it had been practised for some time by the family which Cosimo overthrew: his distinction lay in the perfection of its employment. The fact that he and his family were, ostentatiously, "private citizens", gave the Florentine Renaissance a quality of its own, for artists worked, ostensibly at least, not for the glorification of a ruling house but for the glory of the Republic.

He was not only a wise statesman, largely responsible for the forty peaceful years in Italy which followed 1454, but also identified with all the intellectual and artistic life of the city—Greek had come to Florence before his time: Masaccio had revived the art of Giotto: under Cosimo, Plato became a fashionable study: Brunelleschi finished the dome of the Duomo: Fra Angelico adorned the new convent of San Marco: Filippo Lippo broke new ground in art: and (as we have seen, p. 164 n.) Benozzo Gozzoli brought the Emperor of Constantinople to follow the young Lorenzo in the procession of the Magi in the Riccardi chapel, with the old Cosimo painted as one of the onlookers. No man better deserved the title of Pater Patriae, during the thirty years of his sway.

His son, Lorenzo the Magnificent, carried on and enriched his tradition from 1464 to 1492, and played a large personal part

\* He left his money to the State on condition that his statue should be set up "on the Piazza", meaning, of course, the Piazza San Marco: the government, saying that no particular piazza was named, set it up elsewhere.

in the revival of the Italian language. Ghirlandaio and Botticelli are but the most famous of the artists who flourished under his patronage, and Pico della Mirandola of the humanists. We, like Florence, owe an incalculable debt to the Medici. It was a marvellous springtime, but inevitably short-lived. Under Lorenzo the pretence that the ruler was a mere citizen became almost threadbare, and when he died and was succeeded by his son, "a man of small brain", the reaction set in. The art of Michelangelo strikes a very different note from that of Botticelli's *Primavera*, for the dissatisfaction was not only political but moral, and when Savonarola denounced the moral corruption which the Renaissance had brought, he for a brief time brought the Florentines to believe that the judgment for their sins was at hand: he saw in the French invasion of 1494 "the sword of the Lord upon earth". Charles VIII, as we shall see, was ill-qualified to execute the *divine judgment*.

*Naples*.—Naples, which had once, under the House of Anjou, seemed to have some chance of ruling all Italy, had been cursed with a disputed succession since 1381. There were two French claimants, one from a family which had been identified with Italy for nearly a century and a half, while the other, the house of Valois-Orleans, was purely French, and was indeed soon to provide a King of France. It is characteristic of the little common regard for Italian interests (or for their own) that the neighbouring states were quite ready to prefer the second alternative.

The former house prevailed, until it ended in 1435 in a capricious lady who vacillated between the French claimant and King Alfonso of Aragon and Sicily: Alfonso established his position and reigned with wisdom and success till 1458 when he died, leaving only an illegitimate son, Ferrante, to succeed him in Naples. Thanks largely to Cosimo dei Medici and Pius II, he made good his claim, and reigned, though faced by strong opposition, till 1494. That was to prove the year of destiny, and Naples the storm centre: it was a tragedy for Italy that at this moment the usurpation of Ludovico Il Moro at Milan (which, as we have seen, involved the humiliation of Ferrante's grand-daughter, the real Duchess of Milan) should have set Naples and Milan at variance, and so smoothed the invader's path.

*The Papacy*.—Martin V (1417-31) and his successor were largely occupied with the "Conciliar" movement which threatened to set

up general councils as superior in authority to the Pope—the Council of Basel actually declared a Pope dethroned in 1439—and to insist on reforms which he might not approve. The danger passed, but only at the expense of concordats with the various national Churches which were ominous for the future. In 1460 a Bull was issued declaring any appeal from a Pope to a general council to be heretical: this may well have been “a Pyrrhic victory”, for it exalted the personal authority of the Popes precisely at the moment when their personal character was unequal to the emergency.\*

Nicholas V (1447–55) was the first, as Pius II (1458–64) was the greatest and most attractive, of the humanist Popes. Nicholas was a great patron of the Renaissance, an indefatigable collector of manuscripts and the enlightened patron of Fra Angelico. Pius—“a cultivated man adapting himself gracefully to his surroundings”—was himself the Renaissance incarnate, in its strength and in its weakness: a brilliant writer, a wise statesman, and an enthusiastic archaeologist. When confronted with the crisis caused by the fall of Constantinople, Nicholas was quite helpless; Pius, who took the project of a crusade more seriously, though without any earnestness of conviction, was destined to find that the Renaissance, which limited man’s horizon to this world, and cared more for individuals than for causes, did not provide the atmosphere in which a true crusade could flourish, and the discovery broke his heart.

After Pius II the moral character of the Papacy rapidly declines. Little would be gained by enlarging on the shameless nepotism of Sixtus IV (1471–84) and Innocent VIII (1484–92): the former’s only claim to honourable remembrance lies in the name of the Sistine chapel which he founded: it was at least equally characteristic that he recklessly stirred up again the latent spirit of enmity in the Italian states: and Alexander VI (1492–1503) has made the name of Borgia a synonym for murderous iniquity. Even if some of the stories are exaggerated, and even if, as seems possible, Cesare Borgia, with all his vices, was a capable ruler, it remains clear that in 1494 the Popes had for a quarter of a century set an example of selfish care for the material interest of themselves and their relations which ill became the leaders of Christendom.

\* With the failure of the Conciliar movement constitutional reform was proved vain, and the way was paved for Luther on one side and for Ignatius Loyola on the other.

It is difficult to exaggerate the harm thus done: it was generally agreed that reform was needed in the Church, and that this could only come from a General Council or from a Pope: the official Church had just rejected the idea of such a Council, and staked everything on an autocratic Pope: and it was at this precise moment, when a great and good Pope might conceivably have saved the situation, that the cardinals elected Sixtus, Innocent and Alexander.\*

This brief summary will have shown how ill-prepared Italy was in 1494 to meet the attack of a foreign invader—Milan in the hands of a usurper, Venice entirely occupied with her own interests, Florence ruled by a weakling, Naples at enmity with Milan and just deprived of her king, the Papacy held by a Borgia. The omens were certainly favourable to a buccaneering adventurer, and the buccaneer was ready in the person of Charles VIII of France.

### *Italy 1494-1513*

Charles VIII, who came to the throne in 1483, was for a time under the tutelage of his wise elder sister, Anne of Beaujeu. That prudent lady secured for him the hand of the Duchess of Brittany, and so rounded off the kingdom by adding the one great province as yet independent. There were difficulties in the way of the marriage, for the bridegroom was engaged to the daughter of the Emperor Maximilian, and that energetic and enterprising widower had already been married by proxy to the bride. However, he was appeased by the surrender of Artois and the County of Burgundy (Franche Comté), and the thrifty ghost of Louis XI may well have felt that, as a man could unfortunately not marry two ladies at once, his son had made the right bargain.

It would have been very far from approving his first action as soon as he came of age: exiles from Naples invited him to claim the crown as the representative of the House of Anjou, and he leapt at the opportunity. Henry VII was appeased with a money bribe, Ferdinand of Aragon by the cession to him of Roussillon, and in September 1494 Charles set out for the Alps.†

\* It will be remembered that that learned Roman Catholic historian, Lord Acton, bitterly blamed Bishop Creighton for undue leniency to the characters of the Renaissance Popes.

† Francis had no legal claims on Milan: these belonged to another French house, that of Orleans, and were, as we shall soon see, asserted by his cousin and successor Louis XII.

The omens, as has been said, seemed favourable, and at first all went well: Ludovico Il Moro, glad of any diversion against Naples, welcomed him at Milan: Florence (which had just expelled the Medici) he entered as a conqueror: Pope Alexander, at first hostile, admitted the French into Rome, and early in 1495 Charles entered Naples in triumph, the old king having died and his successor having abdicated in favour of his son.

But the success was short lived: it had roused the alarm of Venice and Milan which, with Maximilian, Ferdinand and the Pope, formed a League against him: he had to fight his way back to France, and, but for the indiscipline of his enemies, must have suffered a serious defeat: as it was, he came safely home, but before the end of 1496 all his conquests had vanished and a Spanish king of the old house, supported by Ferdinand's troops, was firmly on the throne of Naples. Charles died next year, leaving the throne of France to his cousin, Louis, Duke of Orleans.

But the expedition had demoralised both Italy and France: a disastrous precedent had been set, and Louis XII at once proclaimed himself (1498) King of France, Jerusalem, Naples and Sicily, and Duke of Milan: his claim to the last title came from his grandmother, a Visconti, whereas the Sforza claim of Ludovico Il Moro only came through marriage with an illegitimate daughter of the house.

Having secured himself at home by marrying Charles's widow, the Duchess of Brittany,\* and by various concessions to his people, he invaded Milan (1499) in concert with the Venetians, always ready to attack their old enemies, and, with the support of the Pope, as ready as they were to betray Italy for personal reasons. Ludovico was taken prisoner, and Louis held Milan with only little more difficulty than Charles had found in taking Naples.

It was clear that he could not hope to take Naples himself without coming to an agreement with Ferdinand of Spain, and a shameless bargain was made by which the present king was to be expelled and they to divide his realm. The robbers fell out, and in the end, thanks to his great captain, Gonsalvo da Cordova,† Ferdinand secured the whole Kingdom of Naples and Louis had nothing (1503).

\* This required, and received, a dispensation from the Pope, granted on political grounds, to put away his existing wife.

† Gonsalvo was the real creator of the famous Spanish infantry, which he taught to use the long German spear. One saying of this great General is deservedly famous—"I would not fall back a step to gain a hundred years of life".

In the same year he lost his ally, Pope Alexander, who was succeeded by Julius II (della Rovere). This warlike Pope, though hardly more spiritual than his predecessor, had a hatred of "barbarians" in Italy, and devoted his reign (1503-13) to the attempt to make the Papal States the strongest power in Italy. His first object was to humble Venice, and he formed with Maximilian and Louis the so-called League of Cambrai for the purpose. His motives were clear, for Venice was a dangerous rival to papal power in Italy, but it was monstrous to give it the form of a crusade on the alleged ground that Venice was too friendly with the Turks. It is true that, in the interests of trade, she had maintained relations with them, but, as time was to show, she was at least as ready to fight them as any other Italian power.

The real sin of Venice, for which she was to be deservedly punished, was that of having welcomed the foreigners into Italy, and the ingratitude of the French was a fitting return: she lost the whole of her mainland dominion as the result of a battle in a single day (1509). His purpose accomplished, Julius changed sides and formed the Holy League (1511) to drive the French from Italy, its other members, absurdly enough, being the Venetians and Ferdinand. The French, under Gaston de Foix (the French king's nephew and Ferdinand's brother-in-law), known as "the Thunderbolt of War", were at first victorious, but he was killed in the battle of Ravenna, and the League, aided by the Swiss, who had quarrelled with Louis over the pay of their mercenary troops, drove them across the Alps.

As a result of these complicated manoeuvres, Italy, when Julius died in 1513, looked much as it had done in 1494. The Sforza family were back in Milan: the Medici (Savonarola having been martyred in 1498 by the fickle people) back in Florence: the Spanish dynasty was firmly seated in Naples: Venice had regained most of her possessions: but the thirty years had done untold harm to the country and prepared the way for more.

In the last stages of the story Julius II is the dominant figure: he was the real founder of the Papal States, and deserves the credit of having had a wider object than the advancement of his own family. At the same time a Pope constantly engaged in war—it is said that his beard was grown because of the difficulties of camp life—was not the man to raise the moral tone either of Italy or of Christendom. He was the first builder of St. Peter's and the patron of Bramante, Michelangelo and Raphael: it is an ironic fact



that his obscure tomb can only with difficulty be found in that magnificent church, and that it was the sale of indulgences for its building which provided the occasion from which the Reformation was to spring. With his death (1513), that of Louis (1515), Ferdinand (1516) and that of Maximilian (1519), the old generation passes away, and the stage is set for the Medici Popes, for Francis I and Charles V: it was a stage in which Henry VIII had been performing, not without distinction, since 1509, and on which Solymán the Magnificent was to appear in 1520.

## The Sixteenth Century

The sixteenth century may be called the Age of the Reformation, provided that we remember that it was the outbreak of forces which had long been at work, and to it most of our space must be given. But it may be convenient to give the briefest possible summary of the other events of the century.

The dominating figure of its first half is Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor (1519) and King of Spain. He seemed by inheritance to have the world at his feet, but abdicated in 1555, a worn-out and disappointed man: unpopular in Spain as a Fleming: hated in Flanders as a Spaniard: harassed by continual wars with France, and by the Reformation in Germany. Spain, under Philip his son, has two disastrous failures; in the Netherlands, where she failed to suppress the revolt, and in the Armada: but she succeeds in keeping the Reformation at a distance; and has also after 1559 made her influence supreme in Italy as it was for a century to remain. In France the century which begins with the dashing but disreputable Francis I (1515-47) ends after a series of religious and dynastic wars with the accession of the Bourbons in the person of Henry IV (1589-1610), and with toleration granted to the Huguenots by the Edict of Nantes.

In England it is the century of the Tudors, and even those who least approve the character of Henry VIII (1509-47) must admire the success with which he established a despotism under the forms of law, and the amazing skill with which his daughter Elizabeth (1558-1603), faced with a situation as difficult as any which any sovereign ever had to meet, interpreted the wishes of her people and deservedly gave her name to the Elizabethan age.

Nor should it be forgotten how long and serious was the menace of the Turks.

*The Historical Background of the Reformation*

So far as the Continent of Europe is concerned, the first half of this period was dominated by the sixty years of almost continual war between France and a power which may be alternatively described as the Empire, Spain or the House of Hapsburg. The

last is the truest title, for Charles V was above all things a Hapsburg, and lost his opportunities in Germany largely because of his concern for Hapsburg interests in Spain, the Low Countries and Italy.

It is hardly an undue simplification to say that throughout these years the Hapsburgs wished to recover Burgundy, and, so to speak, to avenge Charles the Bold, whose heirs they were, while the Valois on their side were determined to seize or to recover Milan. Neither side attained its object, and so long a war has seldom been fought with so slight a direct result.

The scene of operations was in the main the unfortunate Italy, and one result of this was to give an increased importance to Savoy which guarded the road to and from France—a situation which its rulers were, before the end of the century, to begin to exploit to their advantage. France was occasionally invaded, and, in the second phase of the struggle, retaliated by attacking the Low Countries, the Hapsburgs' most vulnerable frontier.

The war was carried on, on both sides, with a complete disregard of scruple and on principles which would have commended themselves to Machiavelli. France did not hesitate, when it suited her purpose, to ally with the German Protestants or even with the Turk, and owes her possession of Metz, Toul and Verdun to these discreditable manoeuvres: Charles V did not sink quite so low, but, though himself not without religion, dealt with all religious questions with close regard to political expediency. Both sides made full use of dynastic marriage proposals, especially of those in which the youth of the suggested bride afforded full scope for reconsideration.\* English foreign policy during Henry VIII's reign was conducted on similar lines, the doctrine later dignified with the name of Balance of Power giving a good excuse for changing sides at any convenient moment.

Something must be said of the characters of those chiefly concerned. Charles V was gifted with a persevering obstinacy which made him a formidable opponent: he was a very hard worker, and, on the whole, secured most of the limited objects at which he aimed, but he had no distinction either of character or intellect, and there is good reason to doubt whether he had a heart. Francis I (1515-47) was a complete contrast, a bad king and a bad man, rash and imprudent, with a character only saved from

\* Charles, for example, after toying with various suggestions, ultimately married Isabella of Portugal, a match obviously advantageous to Hapsburg interests in Spain.

utter worthlessness by a dash of Renaissance culture: "he was purely, wanton, selfish and revengeful", says one writer (Stubbs); "the embodiment of all that is worst in the French character and of little of what is best", says an historian of France (Macdonald); the French Renaissance which he typified was "imitative rather than creative" and led only to artificiality and a heavy and degraded classicism: we shall see later (p. 200) the harm which he did to the French Church.

Henry II (1547-59) was largely responsible for the change of the scene of action to the eastern and north-eastern borders of France, a wise decision in the interests of his country: when Mary, who succeeded to the English throne in 1553, married Philip, Charles V's son, England naturally inclined towards the Spanish side, and lost Calais in 1558 as a result.

The characters of the Popes of this period were naturally of great importance for the Italian campaigns: we will postpone till later any discussion of their religious attitude. For more than twenty years, with a brief interval, the Papacy was in the hands of two Medici Popes, Leo X (1513-21), son of Lorenzo the Magnificent, and Clement VII (1523-34), the illegitimate son of Lorenzo's brother. Both were selfish and deceitful, and set the interests of the Medici family above Italian (or Christian) interests. In the war, their policy was trimmed, very unsuccessfully, in favour of either France or Spain as seemed at the moment best for Medicean purposes; and the sack of Rome in 1527 marked the failure of their efforts. Leo is not unfairly represented by the famous saying attributed to him, "Let us enjoy the Papacy since God has given it to us": Clement's most characteristic achievement was the marriage of Catherine dei Medici (1533) to Henry of France—a marriage effected, we may note, at the very time when the Most Christian King was opening negotiations for alliance with the Turk.

Paul III (1534-49), though a somewhat better man, was not above applying Medicean methods to the Farnese family: and after five years in which the next Pope had leaned to the Spanish side, there came a Pope, Paul IV, Caraffa (1555-59), bitterly hostile to Spain, but, after a brief and ineffective attack, he returned to the congenial task of preparing the Counter-Reformation.

The particular events of this long series of wars call for little detailed comment. Francis I's victory at Marignano (1515) won

him Milan for a time; wars followed, centred round that city, which was a vital link in the communications between Spain and Germany. It again changed hands, after fighting in which died Bayard, the *Chevalier sans peur et sans reproche*. Further French successes made Clement VII believe his to be the winning side, but at the Battle of Pavia (1525) "all was lost" to the French "except honour": Francis, who was taken prisoner, proceeded to lose "honour" also by at once repudiating the terms on which he had regained his liberty. We need not trouble, therefore, about this treaty (from keeping which he was absolved by the Pope) except to notice that it gave Burgundy to Charles: Francis formed another league with the Pope against him, but the sack of Rome by German and Spanish troops in 1527 was the punishment of Clement's double dealing: the city was plundered without discrimination or mercy, while the Pope took refuge in the Castel Sant' Angelo.\* Henry VIII, now anxious for the annulment of his marriage with Catherine of Aragon, Charles's aunt, allied himself with Francis, who invaded Italy again. Finally the Peace of Cambrai (1529) gave Spain supremacy in Italy: Francis kept Burgundy but resigned his overlordship of Artois and Flanders. In the same year Charles struck a bargain with the Pope which was almost a family compact: his illegitimate daughter was to marry Clement's nephew: the Medici were to rule Florence: Henry VIII's inconvenient request was to be refused, and, as a concession to public propriety, the Pope and the emperor were to unite against Turks and heretics (*C.M.H.*, p. 203). It should be remembered that at this very time Solyman was at the gates of Vienna (see p. 209).

But Francis was still bent on regaining Milan and crossed the Alps again in 1536, now in avowed alliance with the Turk: Charles, in difficulty with the Protestants at home and with a rising in Ghent, made a truce in 1538, but Francis again declared war three years later, this time attacking the Netherlands, Henry VIII being now alienated from him and the Empire now united against him in horror at his Turkish treaty. Another treaty in 1544 left things much as before, except that Charles renounced his claim on Burgundy and Francis any interest in Naples: he died two years later.

Henry II preserved peace for a time, while Charles was involved

\* The most notable incident of the siege is Benvenuto Cellini's claim that he shot with his own hands the Duke of Bourbon, a French prince in charge of Charles's army.

in a religious war in Germany: in 1552, declaring that he came to protect German liberty, he invaded Lorraine: the price of his assistance to the Protestants (whom he was persecuting severely in France) was the bishoprics of Metz, Toul and Verdun. Charles, faced by foes at home and abroad, was unable to resist with success, and his abdication followed in 1555, his spirit broken by a long and unsuccessful attempt to retake Metz.\*

The last round of the struggle, fought now between Philip and Henry, ended with two Spanish successes, against the anti-Spanish Pope in Italy and at the battle of St. Quentin in 1557, which nearly led to the fall of Paris.† The war was finally ended by the Treaty of Cateau Cambresis in 1559, by which France acquired the three bishoprics and Calais, and surrendered Spanish Navarre. But, in spite of these gains, it may be held that France, on the whole, was the loser, largely because of her persistent hankering (in defiance of geography) after dominion in Italy. She had encouraged the Protestants, assisted the Turks, and encouraged a warlike spirit among her smaller nobility which was to lead to many troubles.

Even this bald account will have shown how many and various were the political and military problems which Charles had to face, and will explain why he was only able to give part of his attention to those, even more serious, presented by the Reformation in Germany.

### *The Reformation in Germany (to 1555)*

If we seem to have spent an unconscionable time over much inconclusive fighting, this does not mean that we have been neglecting our central subject, the Reformation, which cannot be rightly understood without some knowledge of its background. There is a real danger that the unthinking may suppose that the Reformation was the work of a single man and allow too little for the conditions in which his protest was made. No doubt Luther's personality had a great effect both for good and for evil, but that is equally true of the personalities of others, and for this reason it has been necessary to emphasise both their characters and their preoccupations.

The desire for reform in the Church had been in the air for more than a century, for reasons which we need not recapitulate:

\* "The war of 1670 was the *renouveau* for 1552" (Stubbs, *Lectures on European History*, p. 114).

† The battle was fought on St. Laurence's Day, and in his honour Philip built his great church, monastery and palace of the Escorial in the form of a gridiron.

that the reformation so generally desired became "the Reformation" which we know, was not due to one man alone. Had the Papacy not been in the hands of worldly and selfish Popes, had the emperor not been distracted by enemies within and without his vast and heterogeneous domain, they could, either separately or together, have guided the movement for reform into a very different channel: but with Leo and Clement preoccupied with the interests of the Medici family and Charles distracted between particularism in Spain, disaffection in the Netherlands, and the relentless enmity of France, there was no chance of a serious attempt to approach religious questions in a judicial, much less a Christian, spirit.

The particular reasons which led to Luther's action must be briefly described. He was far from being either an ignorant monk or a natural revolutionary. He was a successful Professor of Theology in the University of Wittenberg, and had taken Orders after a spiritual crisis, not unlike that of St. Paul, in which he found, in faith in God's love, that peace of heart of which his deep sense of sin had robbed him. A visit to Rome on behalf of his Order had much the same effect on him as it had on Boccaccio's Jew\*: he went as a pious pilgrim, and came away pious still, but disturbed in mind. It was not till nine years later that, in his capacity of Professor, he proposed for public disputation in 1517 the difficult and thorny subject of Indulgences. The grant of Indulgences was based ultimately on the theory of the "treasury of merits", which maintained that the good deeds of living men, and of the saints in heaven, added to the inexhaustible merits of Christ Himself formed, as it were, a storehouse on which the Pope, as its guardian, could draw to make up the deficiency of merit in Christian people: according to Thomas Aquinas, Indulgences procured the remission of penalties whether imposed by a priest or not, or, in other words, of Purgatorial penalties as well as of penance on earth (*C.M.H.*, p. 125). The system had reached its height under Boniface VIII, when they were bestowed on those who visited Rome for the Jubilee, later, on those who were ready to pay a sum equivalent to the cost of the journey, and, later still, on those who contributed to any pious purpose; the particular Indulgences with which Luther was concerned were for those ready to contribute to the building of St. Peter's.

\* Boccaccio tells of a Jew converted to Christianity by a visit to Rome, on the ground that no religion which was not true could have survived such iniquity.

There was nothing surprising in his action: the Elector of Saxony had refused to allow Indulgences to be sold in his land, and there were many points about them which called for discussion: for instance, did Indulgences remit guilt or only its penalties? Theologians might deny, but common practice clearly asserted, that guilt as well as penalty was forgiven.

Luther's Theses, in the opinion of his Bishop, contained nothing heretical, but they touched an important source of income, and Leo X, who cared more for revenue than for religion and was entirely ignorant of German opinion, summoned him to Rome to explain himself. This was regarded in Germany (where it was strongly felt that the Papacy was unduly concerned with purely Italian interests) as an insult to a German university, and the Pope was induced to leave the matter in the hands of his Legate, before whom Luther was told to present himself at Augsburg in 1518. There he learnt that no discussion could be permitted until he recanted his heresies. He refused, and returned to Wittenberg, appealing from the Pope ill-informed to the Pope to be well-informed.

"Had Leo not behaved to Luther as a proud secular prince apparently indifferent to all values except his own worldly interests, much subsequent misfortune might have been spared not only to his See but to the whole Church." (Jalland, *op. cit.*, p. 437.)

A special delegate was sent to discuss matters with him, who found that he was ready to yield much; but a public disputation was held in which a violent opponent forced him to admit that he did not think that all the opinions of Wycliffe and Huss were wrong. Luther was thus compelled to reconsider his position, and the result was several treatises, of which the most important was an Appeal to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation, wherein the claims made on behalf of the Pope were denounced and the Pope himself blamed as the chief obstacle to reform.

In 1521 he was summoned before the first German Diet held by the new Emperor Charles V. His famous saying that "he would go to Worms if there were as many devils there as there were tiles on its roofs" was not perhaps as bold as it sounds, for German public opinion was clearly on his side: but when he was asked whether he would retract his heresies he replied that he must be first convinced by Holy Scripture that he was wrong, and his declaration "here stand I: I can no other" represents his courage truly, whether the words were actually uttered by him or not.



The Ban of the Empire was pronounced against him—on the day when Charles signed a secret treaty with Leo X, giving substantial promises to the Medici and their friends: the suggestion of a bargain is obvious. Luther was to be protected by his safe conduct for twenty days, but before they were over he had been carried off to safe custody by the Elector of Saxony. "The Reformation" had begun.

The story so far suggests that if Leo X had known (or cared) more about Germany (or about Luther) the situation might have been saved. The rest of it can only be briefly summarised.

Leo died in 1521, and his successor, Adrian VI, personally pious and anxious for a reform of the Church, died next year (to the joy of the Romans, who had no liking for a virtuous Fleming); from Clement VII nothing in the way of reform could be expected. Among the princes of Germany the orthodox were in the majority, but the imperial cities were all on Luther's side and the lay estates full of grievances against the Papacy. The Diet of Nuremberg, to Clement's anger, demanded a General Council to meet in Germany; Charles, while denouncing Luther, urged that a Council should meet at Trent, which Clement refused. Germany began to fall into two religious camps.

There were three possible solutions, a final extirpation of heresy by the emperor, a constitutional reform in Church and State, guided by the princes, or an arrangement by which each prince established in his own dominions the religion which he preferred. The third solution (we may note) was that ultimately adopted. In 1524 there broke out a savage Peasant war with which the Council of Princes (Charles being then in Italy) proved utterly unable to deal \*: this suggests that they were quite incompetent to carry out the second alternative. Luther was blamed for the rising, in which some of his extreme followers took the lead, and denounced it with savage ferocity—perhaps the gravest stain on his character: this lost him to some extent the support of the lower classes: he relied on the great middle class and those of the princes who favoured him. The effect on Charles was to convince him that rebellion and heresy went hand in hand: the older he grew, the more Spanish grew his religion.

The Diet of Spire (1526) took a step in the direction of the third solution mentioned above (*Cuius Regio eius Religio*), but

\* In the eighteenth century the German peasantry remained the most wretched in Europe (*C.M.H.*, p. 191).

this was revoked three years later (it was the "protest" then made by the minority which brought the name "Protestant" into being)\*: and Charles hoped at the Diet of Augsburg (1530) to reach a final settlement, being then at the height of his power.

The Protestants were invited to state their case, and drew up the Confession of Augsburg: the orthodox refused to agree: and the emperor, who had at first wished to be a fair mediator, and was still anxious for a General Council, firmly supported them, giving their opponents till April to consider whether they would return to the Catholic Church. The result was the immediate formation by the Protestant party of the League of Schmalkalde: the movement had now become definitely political, and as such awakened the interest of the French king. Charles, threatened on three sides, by the French, the Turks and the Protestants, was forced to procrastinate, and undertook to secure a General Council or, if necessary, to call a general Assembly of the Empire. He was rewarded by loyal support against the Turks and inflicted a check on Solymán.

For seven years Protestantism was left unmolested, while Charles was otherwise engaged, and in them it made considerable strides, despite an Anabaptist rising for which Luther was again unjustly blamed. In 1541 another attempt was made at reconciliation, and the prospects at one time seemed hopeful; but Francis and the Pope used their influence to thwart it, and it was rejected by the Chamber of Princes, some of whom feared that a reunited Germany would only increase Hapsburg power. But some concessions were made, and it was agreed that, until a General Council should meet, no one should be prevented from adopting Lutheranism.

In 1544 Charles went further still, again under stress of foreign war, and promised a General, Free and Christian Council: he induced Pope Paul III (by concessions to his Farnese grandson) to summon one at Trent, but the Protestants refused to regard it as either *free* or *general*, as it was ill attended, as its members were to vote as individuals and not by nations, and as it refused to discuss abuses before considering dogma.

In 1546 the emperor, having won over Maurice of Saxony, a Lutheran duchy, to his side, felt strong enough to proclaim the

\* The original "Protestants" were six princes, of whom John of Saxony, Philip of Hesse and George of Brandenburg were the most eminent, and fourteen imperial cities, including Nuremberg, Augsburg, Ulm and Constance.

Imperial Ban against those who refused to accept the Diet's decision against Protestantism. The League of Schmalkalde had trusted him too much and was taken unprepared: Charles and Maurice at first met with much success, and next year, in spite of a quarrel with the Pope (mainly on Farnese family questions), won a great victory at Mühlberg. But his harsh interpretation of the terms made with his defeated enemies led to a quarrel with Maurice, and he also quarrelled again with the Pope on the old question whether the Council should meet in Italy or at Trent.

A document called "The Interim" was published in Germany, of which the most important statement was "There is but one Church of which the Pope is Bishop; but the power lies in the Church under the guardianship of the Holy Spirit, rather than in the Pope".\* This the Catholics refused to accept, but a new Pope re-summoned the Council to Trent and prospects of agreement seemed bright. But the Council ended in failure, for the Protestants who attended held that a Council was superior to a Pope, and the Pope himself suspected that the emperor wished to see a system similar to that in Spain, where the royal authority was too great for papal liking.

Maurice, now Elector of Saxony, was nursing his grievance, and in 1552 changed sides: as has already been told, Henry II joined the Protestants (at a price), and Charles, put to flight, had to yield: a final treaty, which he left his brother Ferdinand to ratify, provided that every Prince and City should be allowed to choose their religion, and that those who refused to conform should be allowed to depart with their goods. This Peace of Augsburg (1555) became the law of Germany. The mediaeval conception of Church and State was finally discarded.

The moral of this long story is that his preoccupation with foreign affairs, and the lack of co-operation by the Popes with whom he had to deal, fatally handicapped Charles in his attempt to deal with the situation. He was genuinely anxious to do so, but only on his own terms. He did not persecute in Germany, not having the power to do so, but he did persecute in the Netherlands: the best that can be said for him is that he was sincere in his religious convictions. He had not the elevation of spirit nor the generosity of mind nor the width of intelligence to grapple suc-

\* It seems probable that this represented Charles's own view: his experience of Popes cannot but have weakened his faith in papal supremacy, which he found means to minimise in Spain. In so far as he was responsible for its publication it was a bold step to take.

cessfully with a problem which demanded all these qualities for its solution.

The settlement reached at Augsburg brought obvious weaknesses both to religion and to Germany: it consecrated the disunion of the country and prepared the way for the Thirty Years War: it gave the princes the choice between two (and only two) possible religions, Lutheranism or Catholicism, while for the people generally, their religion was settled for them by their territorial prince, which was far from the liberty which Luther had proclaimed, for dissenters were treated with little lenity. For this result Luther must be held largely to blame, but we must make some attempt to sum up his greatness and his limitations.

Let us deal first with his limitations. He was no statesman, either in the religious or the political field: we have noted his lack of sympathy with the peasants, and his very real conservatism, which saved him from what he regarded as the liberal heresies of Zwingli,\* made him unsympathetic with those who were not satisfied with the position which he had personally reached. He was, indeed, that strange being, a temperamental conservative entrusted with a creed which was essentially revolutionary.

Consequently, when he advanced from the great truths which it was his mission to proclaim, his steps were tentative and uncertain: he was led into compromises and contradictions from which the cause of Protestantism has suffered ever since. Being no profound thinker, it is not surprising that on the question of predestination he failed to walk steadily on a path on which St. Paul stumbled and St. Augustine apparently slipped, but other pronouncements of his also showed no clearness of thought.

For example, he started from a premiss which was unquestionably true, that "good works" (such as the buying of Indulgences) are of no avail unless a man's heart be right with God—unless, in his own words, he had "faith": from this beginning he was led, by natural resentment at the treatment he received, to depreciate the value of good works altogether and to champion (his version of) St. Paul against (his version of) St. James.

But again, he held, with good warrant from the New Testament, that all men are equally God's children and in a true sense His priests. This led him to maintain that the honest performance of a man's daily work is as acceptable to God as the special service

\* Zwinglianism flourished in Switzerland, which could therefore not co-operate with those who followed Luther.

which priests perform. So, by a curious paradox, the creed which had started as a crusade against "works" came to be a glorification of work for its own sake—an idea which is only doubtfully scriptural. Hence comes the argument, for which there is some historical warrant, that Protestantism is the nursing mother of Capitalism. But while, no doubt, it is true that in Protestant circles business success came to be regarded as a proof of divine approval, it should not be forgotten that Capitalism was no invention of the Reformation but had flourished under Catholic auspices: man for man, the Frys and the Wilberforces of the world are better men and better Christians than the capitalistic Medici or Chigi, though both of these latter families produced Popes.

His innate conservatism, and his conservative reliance on Scripture as a political guide, led him to exalt the temporal power and to make unworthy concessions to the Protestant princes: far from being a champion of political liberty, as we instinctively expect him to have been, he preached passive obedience and the divine right of kings: in his eyes there should be only "one sword and that wielded by a rightly advised and godly prince". The Reformation inevitably tended to promote liberty (for "where the spirit is Lord, there is liberty"), but Luther did not see or approve, this political result. He had more sympathy with its revival "of theocratic ideals, theological politics and appeals to Scripture in regard to the form of government, which was really a reversion to the ideals of the earlier Middle Ages" (Figgis, *op. cit.*). Finally, his dislike of the monastic ideal as a whole, rather than of its perversion, helped to encourage a vulgar contempt for poverty, and explains Matthew Arnold's dictum that he was only "a Philistine of genius".

But we value the great men of history for what they were, not for what they failed to be. Nothing can rob him of the honour he deserves for the courage and constancy with which he maintained the direct access of man to God, as the fundamental fact in man's relationship with Him. All great doctrines, when briefly stated, are liable to misinterpretation: Luther's principle of "Faith only" was as true, and as dangerous, as St. Augustine's "Love and do what you like"—*ama et fac quod vis*. By his translation of the Bible, a great landmark in German prose, by his books of devotion and by his hymns (the most famous of which Heine called the Mar-seillaise of the Reformation) he rendered great service to German religion: his service to the Christian world lay in his fearless pro-

clamation of the message entrusted to him. It was our misfortune, not his fault, that this had to be done by one who had many of the weaknesses of a German peasant \*: the blame, if blame there is to be, lies ultimately with those whose selfishness and indifference had made a Reformation inevitable, and who refused to undertake the task themselves.

### *The Reformation in France 1500-59*

The Reformation in France during these years can be dealt with much more briefly. The religious situation at the beginning of the century was dominated by the "Pragmatic Sanction" first issued in 1438 which asserted the superiority of Councils to the Pope and provided for free election to high ecclesiastical offices: but in 1516 Francis I and Leo X made an iniquitous bargain, abolishing elections, and dividing the appointments between the Pope and the king; "a deal in the spoils of the Gallican church" (Neale, *The Age of Catherine de Medici*, p. 11): the result was to increase the non-residence and the worldly character of the higher clergy: the religious condition of the country as a whole was deplorable.

Though in France the Reformation never developed into a national movement, there was a very general feeling among the educated classes that reform of some kind was needed, and in Francis's reign progress was made, a translation of the New Testament, for example, being produced in 1533, while Briçonnet, Bishop of Meaux, gathered round him a learned body of Reformers. From a man like Francis no consistent action could be expected: at one time he seemed disposed to favour the new movement, and at another (when in need of the Pope's friendship) he attacked it savagely, casting heretics into prison and burning some of them. In 1535 there began the persecution of the Waldenses, a peaceful society in Provence who had affiliated themselves to the Lutherans, and in ten years' time they had been exterminated, some 3,000 men, women and children being killed and twenty-two villages burnt: in 1546 measures were taken against the Reformers of Meaux, fourteen of them being tortured and burnt.

Such persecution showed the need for organisation, and it was in the discipline of Calvinism that the Reformers found their

\* One of these weaknesses was a coarseness of language remarkable even among the sixteenth-century controversialists.

support. Lutheranism, relying on the princes, had lost its crusading fervour, and organisation had never been Luther's strong point. Calvin, one of the most remarkable and influential of Europeans, was a Frenchman, trained as a lawyer, who came under the influence of a great French reformer, Lefèvre, and retired to Basel in 1534 to escape persecution: here he published in 1536 his *Christianae Religionis Institutio*, one of the most influential books ever written. Its essential doctrine is that the Church is the elect people of God and must obey Him, but can only do so if it controls its own destinies: it must be guided by the Holy Spirit and the Scriptures: magistrates must be obeyed, even though wicked, unless they command what God forbids. Next year he went to Geneva, with which his name must always be associated.

Geneva was an imperial city, governed by its bishop, and also by its neighbour, the Duke of Savoy, to guard against whom it had allied itself with the Swiss cantons (it did not actually join the Confederation till 1815): it had in this year, 1536, cast off both allegiances, joined the Reformation, and sworn to live according to the Holy Evangelical Law and the Word of God. Calvin had arrived at the psychological moment. He saw that the city was not taking its oath seriously, and made proposals for its enforcement: they were not found acceptable, and he retired to Strasburg for three years, but in 1541 he was recalled and returned with reluctance to take up the task again. He set up there a theocracy which endured till his death in 1564.

To most English people the name of Calvin suggests little but an extreme doctrine of predestination, nor is it to be denied that his overwhelming sense of God's majesty led him to emphasise His power at the expense of His love,\* but he was much greater as a moralist and a legislator than as a theologian. His French genius combined with his legal training to help him to reduce Protestant theology to a clear-cut system, and to produce an organisation and a discipline rivalling that of the Catholic Church. Discipline was its essence: the Bible was its law book, and it was the ministers who expounded it. In short, he set up a theocracy such as could hardly exist save in a small, free and homogeneous city, and his Consistory of pastors and elders took the whole moral life of the people into their charge, punishing sins—even small offences—as crimes. He took infinite pains with the training of the ministers

\* Browning's *Johannes Agricola in Meditation* is a sympathetic statement of his view.

and with the education of the young. No pains were spared to ensure that the will of God, as revealed in Scripture, was both known and observed.

It is not our duty to criticise this wonderful achievement: for our present purpose what matters is that there was at Geneva this citadel to which persecuted French Protestants could turn, and that before Calvin's death it had sent at least 160 well-instructed Pastors into France. (By May 1561 there were 2,150 Huguenot churches in France (Neale, *op. cit.*, p. 29).) This gave to French Protestantism a tone which it has never lost: with all the learning it brought and all the saintliness which it inspired, it may be doubted whether its origin in the life of a small community for which its rules were first designed did not to some extent weaken Calvinism as a force for the conversion of a nation: but Geneva remained a Protestant citadel, the refuge of the persecuted,\* the home of a prolific printing press: a school of missionaries and the bitterest enemy of the Counter-Reformation. The strength of Calvinism—and how great it was was shown notably in Holland and in Scotland—was due to the fact that it offered a rival dogmatism as rigid as that of Trent. We may deplore the fact, but we must recognise that a doctrine of "exclusive salvation" is one of the most powerful of religious weapons, as has been proved by Calvinists, Roman Catholics and Mahommedans, though the two former have to face the difficulty of reconciling it with the loving Fatherhood of God: it is a difficulty which the Calvinists frankly evade, and the Roman Catholic doctrine of the "invincible" (and therefore pardonable) "ignorance" of Protestants is naturally more satisfactory to themselves than to their brother Christians.

Meanwhile in France the Protestants were organising themselves: their first synod met in 1559, and Henry II and the Cardinal of Lorraine (Guise) were persecuting with a rigour different from Francis's spasmodic violence. Their name of Huguenot came from Geneva,† and their Confession of Faith bears the marks of Calvin's hand. Henry was just contemplating still sterner measures when he died in 1559.

\* This must not be held to imply that Calvin himself was opposed to persecution as such; it might have been possible for Luther to preach toleration, a virtue then almost unknown: it would certainly have been impossible for Calvin. But Calvinism, though in itself intolerant, did much for liberty, for the demand for freedom of worship which it made inevitably encouraged the demand for other personal rights such as freedom of discussion.

† The original Geneva patriots were called Eyyguenots, or men bound by an oath (Eidgenossen).



*The Reformation in England 1509-58*

Against this foreign background it is easier to take a juster view of the Reformation as carried out by Henry VIII (1509-47). Whatever were the defects of his private character, they were infinitely less than those of Francis I, with whom the Popes were always ready to collaborate; his persecutions of Protestants or of Catholics were infinitely less bloodthirsty than those of Francis against the Waldenses or of Charles against the Reformers in Flanders; the demand for a divorce which he made (even if we refuse to accept his plea of conscientious scruple, as we probably, though not quite certainly, should) \* was far better grounded than similar petitions recently granted to other kings: Louis XII, for example, had been allowed to put away his wife simply to secure the Duchy of Brittany; Henry could plead that if he had no male heir his kingdom would be in real danger: no queen had yet ruled a large kingdom with success, and the experiment had proved disastrous in Naples. There can be no doubt that the divorce or annulment would have been granted if Catherine had not been the emperor's aunt, and the Pope at the moment completely in the emperor's power. If Henry's policy was largely selfish, so had the Hapsburg policy long been, and for Medici Popes to criticise selfishness was for Satan to rebuke sin. He indisputably, and shamelessly, diverted Church property to his personal ends, but there was no prince or Pope in his day who was not doing the same so far as his opportunities allowed.

Much the same may be said of his attitude towards the Church: if he usurped power over it, that power differed in degree and not in kind from the power which Charles, to the alarm of the Pope, was seeking to exercise in Spain, and Francis, with papal approval, was exercising in France. If he ultimately rejected papal supremacy, Charles in the "Interim" had declared that it was the Holy Spirit and not the Pope who was the guardian of the Church, and the unreformed and unreforming Papacy with which he had to deal was, in plain truth, quite unfit to exercise supremacy over Christendom.

To say all this is not to excuse Henry for his obvious faults: if to reject the Papacy was a deadly sin, he was unmistakably a sinner, and can only plead that he erred in good company. He was

\* Catherine had had four stillborn children, and one had died a few weeks old; there was some excuse for thinking that the doom pronounced in Leviticus xx. 21, on marriage with a brother's wife, was being fulfilled.

selfish, lustful, cruel and tyrannical, a typical Renaissance king, differing from the rest not so much in his vices as in his ability, and in his real interest in religious questions. This interest was at times entirely subordinated to his own private advantage, but at least he knew the points at issue: his devotion to the Church was real on the one side, and so on the other was that sympathy with some of the reformers' aims which gave us an English Bible and the Litany.\*

This led him to the extremely personal position which he finally adopted and enforced upon the Church, so that loyal subjects of the Pope and enthusiastic reformers were punished with equal severity. He established a *via media* of a kind. It was left for his daughter Elizabeth to work out its implications, after her task had been made infinitely more difficult by the respective excesses of the German and Swiss reformers under Edward VI and the Spanish-Roman Catholics under Mary.†

The way for the English Reformation was largely prepared by the career of Wolsey. It was he who, by uniting temporal and spiritual authority in his own hands, gave to England a practical demonstration what papal authority could mean in the hands of a papal legate. By "riding it to death", he not only infuriated the laity, but also alienated many of the better clergy, who knew comparatively little of the distant Medici Popes.

The course of events in Henry's reign, so far as the Reformation is concerned, can be briefly summarised. In the years 1529-36 he induced his Parliament—for he always acted by forms of law—to deny the authority of the Pope, to recognise the king as "Supreme Head of the Church, so far as the law of Christ allows",‡ and to

\* It should not be forgotten that Henry's conversion to a belief in the English Bible was somewhat tardy. Tyndale, who about 1522 made his famous boast that he would cause "a boy that dryeth the plough" to know more of the Scriptures than his critic, found his work impossible in England. It was at Worms that he printed six thousand copies of his Bible, helped to prosperity as an author by the English bishops, who excommunicated anyone who possessed a copy, but themselves bought them up to burn. He was betrayed into the hands of Charles V, and in 1536 condemned as a heretic, degraded from the priesthood, and burnt. His last words at the stake were "Lord, open the King of England's eyes!" They were, in fact, opened a year later. The debt which English religion and the English language owe to Tyndale is immense.

† It is a little unkind of an able historian (E. Friedell, *op. cit.*, I, 299) to describe Henry's Anglicanism—"a Lutheranism with bishops and prelates, auricular confession and celibacy, a Catholicism without Peter's pence, monastic orders, and monasteries"—as "an absurd and frivolous sort of reform": it represented substantially what many good Christian Englishmen had come to demand and had no claim to rely both on Scripture and on history.

‡ The qualifying clause was inserted by the Church before it was prepared to accept the title, but it was omitted from the Act of Supremacy.

abolish Peter's Pence, annates and appeals to Rome: it also dissolved those smaller monasteries which had less than twelve inmates. This last step would have been justifiable had it not been that, except for the foundation of six new bishoprics,\* their revenues were applied in rewarding Henry's supporters. Their families became an important factor in English life: the new aristocracy was largely founded on wealth taken from the Church.

This anti-papal legislation led to a rising in the North (the Pilgrimage of Grace 1536), but it met with little support in the Midlands or the South, and was brutally crushed: it resulted in the suppression of the greater monasteries, with equal disregard for decency in the use of their money or their buildings.

In the same year the Great (Cranmer's) Bible was ordered to be placed in every parish church, but no change in doctrine was made except for that concerning papal supremacy: while Sir Thomas More was beheaded for asserting that, Protestants were being burnt for denying the papal doctrine of transubstantiation.

Though Henry decided the form which the English Reformation took, reformation of some kind would inevitably have come without him. It was demanded by various classes and for various reasons, some of them as clearly bad as others were undeniably good. There were enough abuses in clerical practice to call for a change, and anti-clericalism, combined with a real respect for religion, has always been an English characteristic.† The papal cause had suffered more in England than elsewhere by the retreat to Avignon, for it had seemed to identify the Pope with the national enemy, and though the Popes were no longer French they were still undeniably foreign: nor was their popularity increased by the obvious fact that they had been demanding, and receiving, a great deal of money from England for a considerable time.

This is by no means to say that the country was anti-papal, but Wycliffe's disciples, the Lollards, had had considerable effect, and though comparatively few accepted his full doctrine, there were many who had come to believe that the Church was too rich: from this it was a short step to thinking (as the nobles had thought ever since John of Gaunt) that its riches might well be in different hands: it was a step which many German princes were to take.

\* Westminster, Oxford, Chester, Gloucester, Bristol and Peterborough.

† "In the babel of voices heard during Henry's reign, the strongest note is a Catholic Nationalist anti-clericalism" (Trevelyan, *History of England*, p. 299).

On an infinitely higher plane were the criticisms of the intellectuals: Erasmus, the great scholar and acute critic (who did so much to promote a real knowledge of the true text of the Bible) spent much time in England—the man who might conceivably have saved the situation had he been infinitely more brave or the Church infinitely more open to reason: as it was, according to his enemies, he only laid the egg whence Luther hatched the cockatrice. He was a close friend of Dean Colet, the wise founder of St. Paul's School, and of Thomas More, who, though invincibly loyal to the Papacy, was scathing in his abuse of monks and friars and of the many popular superstitions which they countenanced and encouraged.

It might have been hoped that men like these, both of them intimate with the young king, himself as keen a patron of the New Learning as of the chase, as expert in music as in tennis, would have been successful, with royal support, in securing those reforms of doctrine and practice which so many good churchmen desired: and so they might have been, had there been at that time any sign of co-operation from Rome in the attempt to reform either. But the Popes of Henry's reign were Julius II, preoccupied with the Papal States,\* Leo X, Clement VII and Paul III, respectively interested in the affairs of the Medici and Farnese families. It cannot be too often repeated that it is with these men that the responsibility for the English Reformation primarily rests. By the time that a serious effort for reform came from Rome, things in England had gone too far, and a river of blood divided Protestant from Catholic.

It is impossible in a few sentences to give a fair picture of the religious situation in Henry's reign, but a few sketches of typical men may show how easy it was in those days for good men honestly to differ from one another and honestly to change their minds. Thomas More, for instance, had warned Henry, when he wrote the book which earned him the title *Fidei Defensor*, not to press the Pope's claims so strongly, and was ready to accept his divorce as a legal fact, but he gave his life sooner than deny the Pope's supremacy. Stephen Gardiner, who had urged the Pope to grant the divorce and accepted the royal supremacy, became Mary's Lord Chancellor and revived the laws against heresy, though eager

\* Even those who hold, apparently with reason, that Julius inspired Michelangelo and Raphael with some of the great conceptions which they carried out in the Vatican, will not deny that he gave more of his time to ideas which were appreciably less sublime.

that heretics should recant: Thomas Cranmer, to whom the Church of England owes much besides its Prayer Book, was not strong enough to resist those parts of Henry's policy with which he disagreed, and drifted further in the direction of extreme Protestantism, but he died for his belief that the English Church was true both to Scripture and to tradition: Hugh Latimer, a straightforward and eloquent reformer, who hated image-worship, relic-worship and pilgrimages, as distracting men from God's true service, struck a great blow for his cause when he died at the stake in Oxford: John Hooper, who was also burnt, thought almost all ceremonies superstitious, and was thus the spiritual father of the English Puritans: we shall see all these types of mind and belief persisting in Elizabeth's reign.

Let us pursue the story of the Reformation to the time of Elizabeth's accession. Edward VI's two Protectors carried Reformation further, and the two Prayer Books of 1549 and 1552 mark the stages of its progress: the foreign Protestants were steadily acquiring more influence, and the Second Prayer Book shows the extreme limit which the English official Reformation ever reached. Mary, on the other hand, was a devout adherent of the old religion, and endeavoured to restore it by force: though a large number of the English people sympathised with her object, the wisest of them (like Cardinal Pole) deprecated her methods, and the burning of heretics, including such men as Cranmer and Latimer, was more in accordance with Spanish than English taste and lost her cause in the end more ground than it gained for it.

These two reigns illustrate the national unwillingness to be dictated to by foreigners: the English disliked the Calvinism of the Second Prayer Book because it came from Switzerland: they had come to distrust Papalism largely because it appeared to come from France or Italy, and they distrusted it still more when it seemed to come from Spain.

### *Other English Affairs 1509-58*

We need not debate the vexed question of the wisdom or otherwise of the foreign policy pursued by King Henry, but two of his achievements at home deserve record, his incorporation in 1535 of Wales with England, and his creation of the Royal Navy. It was he who first built us an effective fleet of fighting ships designed to carry heavy cannon and to fire those "broad-sides" which gave

the victory. For this service alone he deserves an honourable place among the architects of English greatness.

Edward VI's first Protector, Somerset, was an honest and enlightened man and no persecutor: he had a great opportunity of uniting England and Scotland by the marriage of the young king with Mary Queen of Scots, but made the great mistake of following Henry's policy of attempting to bring it about by force: he won the battle but lost the bride, who was at once sent over to France and married to the Dauphin: "No more decisive defeat could have been inflicted on the Scottish hosts or on the Britannic idea" (Maitland). This strengthened the Franco-Scottish alliance which had led Scotland to disaster at Flodden in 1513 and was to trouble England for half a century to come. His second Protector, Northumberland, was a mere aristocratic gangster.

Mary and Philip at their wedding were proclaimed "King and Queen of England, France, Naples, Jerusalem and Ireland, Defenders of the Faith, Princes of Spain and Castile, Archdukes of Austria, Dukes of Milan, Burgundy and Brabant, Counts of Hapsburg, Flanders and Tyrol". Poor Mary was to get little pleasure or profit from any of these high-sounding titles. As Queen of England, she followed a Spanish policy and lost Calais in a war to which that policy led her: as Defender of the Faith in which she wholeheartedly believed, she sought both to reclaim her country and to please God: she failed to do the one as completely as (it must be thought) she failed, by her methods, to do the other. She is a tragic figure, for in an age when no one believed in toleration it was her cruel fate to demonstrate the failure of persecution, unless applied on a totalitarian scale.

### *The Turks in Europe in the Sixteenth Century*

By way of interlude in our study of the Reformation and its results, we will pause for a time to consider those who were entirely unaffected by it. Selim I, the grandson of Mahomet the Conqueror, nearly doubled the extent of the Ottoman Empire, but did so in Asia: after conquering Egypt, he assumed the title of Caliph and Vicar of the Prophet of God.

His son, Solyman the Magnificent (1520-66), turned his attention to the West: he attacked Hungary and took Belgrade (1521), the bulwark which Hunyadi had successfully held against Mahomet some sixty years before (see p. 176): next year he took Rhodes, the Knights being given a home in Malta by Charles V

in 1526. In that year Solyman returned to his attack on Hungary, and at the battle of Mohacz destroyed the Hungarian army and killed their king; Ferdinand, the emperor's brother, was elected King of Bohemia, but a rival was chosen in Hungary and crowned in Buda as a Turkish vassal. Solyman now marched with 300,000 men against Vienna, which was saved by its heroic garrison, aided by a sharp winter which tried the Asiatic troops. (It was not till 1682 that the Turks got so far into Europe again.) He made another devastating raid, and in 1539, when his vassal king had died, conquered Hungary once more, Ferdinand having to pay tribute for the part which he still held—a payment which continued till 1606. It is seldom realised how great in this period the Turkish peril was.

Simultaneously with his attacks on Hungary, Solyman assailed the Mediterranean, encouraged at times by his alliance with the unspeakable Francis I. He gave a commission as admiral to Hayraddin Barbarossa, the corsair of Algiers, who conquered Tunis for him. Charles V reconquered it in 1538, but a great expedition against Algiers three years later was a disastrous failure. But these naval operations, which continued to the end of his reign, were a constant preoccupation to Charles, and distracted him both from the defence of Hungary and from his other duties as emperor. The Turkish menace has so completely faded from our minds that we find it hard to realise that in 1552 150 galleys under Dragut, Barbarossa's successor, anchored for a month in sight of Naples, waiting for a French fleet which never came to support them; or, indeed, that in Charles I's reign Algerian corsairs raided English fishing villages, carrying off prisoners to slavery.

Solyman's successor, Selim II, lost the famous battle of Lepanto (1571), where his fleet was destroyed by Don John of Austria, Charles V's illegitimate son, in command of the fleets provided by Spain, Venice and the Pope. The armament had been raised in the hope of saving Cyprus which had been besieged for a year and a half, but the negotiations took so long that Famagusta had fallen, and its heroic defender, Bragadino, been flayed alive before the fleet finally sailed. Though Cyprus was lost—to remain in Turkish hands till 1878—Lepanto was the turning point of Ottoman power in Europe, for it was the first time that the Turks had been unmistakably beaten in a great battle.

## The Sixteenth Century: the Last Forty Years

*Spain to 1598*

Among the worst evils which can afflict a country must be reckoned a suspicious despotism, an inefficient bureaucracy, a mistaken trade policy, and religious bigotry in high places. From one or other of these all countries have suffered at various times, but it was the unique ill-fortune of Spain to suffer from all simultaneously during the long and lamentable reign of Philip II (1558-98).

In the person of the monarch these defects were incarnate: as jealous of institutions as of individuals, he drove the nobles of Spain out of such public life as remained to them, and never trusted even the most loyal of his servants: he insisted on keeping all business in his own hands, and his untiring industry lost much of its value through his habitual procrastination. Believing, like most of his contemporaries, that gold was the only real wealth, he stifled trade and industry by heavy taxation, relying on the wealth of the Indies, and ruined his Moorish subjects to satisfy his religious zeal.

It was indeed his devotion to his creed, held with an honest fanaticism, which led to his greatest mistakes. The Inquisition, which did not even spare Archbishops, extended its operations over politics and finance,\* and in destroying the small beginnings of Protestantism crushed out also all intellectual independence. The suppression of the "Moriscoes" (Moors who had accepted Christianity) involved him in wars conducted with great ferocity which lasted for ten years, and reduced Andalusia to a desert: to keep an Arabic book was declared an offence punishable by four years in the galleys. Orthodoxy was satisfied.

But the most serious trouble in which his hatred of heresy involved him was the revolt of the Netherlands which must be more fully described, for it had a very definite effect upon the map of Europe.

The seventeen provinces of which the Netherlands were com-

\* Custom house officers, for instance, were brought before it for allowing heretics to cross the frontier, for fear they should be used by Huguenots.



posed were part of the inheritance of the Dukes of Burgundy which had passed to Charles V, and from him to Philip; they were a rich and compact dominion, but held together only by this personal tie, being governed by Dukes, Counts and Margraves of their own, speaking different languages and having different political traditions. It clearly needed wise and conciliatory statesmanship to keep them loyal, for they did not like being taxed for wars not their own, and religious difficulties had arisen in Charles's day, which he had sternly suppressed: but he was a Fleming born and though a persecutor yet a statesman: Philip was both a Spaniard and a fanatic: the result was that after more than thirty years of war the Seven United Provinces of the North created the federal commonwealth which we know as the Dutch Republic, while the rest, impoverished and devastated, remained, as the Spanish, or Austrian, Netherlands, to be the cockpit of Europe.

We may pause for a moment to observe that if the whole seventeen had been sufficiently united to remain together to the end the "middle state", so often dreamt of, would have been created in considerable strength, with results which we cannot calculate.

Though the war was not wholly religious, it was religious in its origin: Philip at once revived the persecuting edicts of his father and, when threatened with opposition in 1559, left the Netherlands never to return, declaring that sooner than reign over heretics he would not reign at all.

It would take too long to describe the progress of the struggle, complicated as it is by the divergent interests of the various Provinces, some of which were Catholic and others Protestant, some democratic and others oligarchic in sympathy: of its original leaders Counts Egmont and Horn were Catholic and William of Orange a Calvinist.\* Its most famous single episodes are perhaps the relief of Leyden (1574) which showed in every sense the value of sea power, and the sack of Antwerp in 1576 by the Spanish soldiery, who were continually mutinous through shortage of pay: the Union was first made at Utrecht in 1579. The revolting Provinces were always sustained by the hope that either France or England would come to their help, but Catherine dei Medici was long involved in the troubles which preceded and followed the Massacre of St. Bartholomew (1572), and Elizabeth, though she

\* Orange, the name of which has had so strange a history, was a small principality on the Rhone, not finally annexed to France till 1714; William's interest in the Netherlands came from his being Lord of Breda in Brabant. It is a far cry from the Rhone and Burgundy to Ulster and the Boyne.

toyed with the idea of accepting the sovereignty which they offered, and sent a considerable number of troops in 1585, was not prepared for a definite breach with Philip before the Armada was launched.\*

On the Spanish side the protagonist was the Duke of Alva, a man not unfairly described by the inscription on a contemporary portrait as "*bourreau des Pays-bas, et de sang innocent toujours insatiable*". He established a Council known as the "Council of Blood" with absolute powers, and is said to have boasted that 18,600 perished by its agency during his rule. Its most conspicuous victims were Count Egmont and Count Horn; the confiscation of the goods of those convicted kept the treasury full, while taxation was carried to a grotesque height. But the revolt continued, and in 1573 Philip characteristically threw over an agent who had obeyed him only too well and had at least restored his authority in the southern provinces. His successor died after three years of milder rule and Don John of Austria arrived in 1576, having crossed France in the disguise of a Moorish slave. He met at first with some success both in diplomacy and in the field, but died two years later, neglected and suspected by his master.

Alexander Farnese, grandson of Charles V and great-grandson of Paul III, deservedly won the title of the Great Duke of Parma: in his fourteen years of governorship (1578-92) he succeeded in securing for Spain the Southern and Western provinces: it is needless to add that he was regarded by Philip with the utmost suspicion.

William of Orange had died eight years before him, assassinated in 1584 by Balthazar Gerard: five attempts had been made on his life since Philip had put him under the Ban and offered 25,000 gold crowns and a patent of nobility to anyone who would deliver him up dead or alive.† William was not a great general but he was a good statesman, and, for his times, a very honest diplomatist. His persistent loyalty to his cause, in good and evil fortune, entitles him to his motto "*Jc Maintiendrai*" and to his name of

\* It is amusing to notice that no less than three of Elizabeth's suitors were involved in the affairs of the Netherlands: the dashing Don John of Austria toyed with the idea of winning her hand (or preferably that of Mary Queen of Scots); the Duke of Anjou, whose proposal she seriously considered, accepted their sovereignty for a brief and disastrous period; and Leicester, whom she really loved, commanded the expedition which she sent, and, much to her annoyance, became Governor-General in 1585.

† "Better late than never" was Philip's comment when he heard the news of his murder.

Father of the United Netherlands. He needs no nobler epitaph than the words of Motley "while he lived, he was the father of a whole great nation, and when he died the little children cried in the streets".

The war continued after the death of the Duke of Parma, latterly with the help of England and France (now ruled by Henry IV): it was ended by the Peace of Vervins (1598) and the independence of the United Netherlands was practically won, although it was not formally conceded till a long truce in 1609, and not legally recognised till the Peace of Westphalia (1648). Holland, as we may now call it, was rapidly to grow in wealth and power, and to play an important part as a stronghold of Calvinism and an exponent of the Calvinistic belief that good business was also good religion.

At the very end of his reign, as a result of the Peace of Vervins, Philip took a step which, if taken earlier, might have saved the situation. He agreed to part with the Netherlands to his daughter Isabella and her husband in full sovereignty, to revert to Spain if they had no children. The example of Austria shows that the re-conversion of a country to Catholicism could be better effected by methods which, in comparison with those adopted by Philip, were mild in the extreme. He made the appeal to force and by force the question was decided.

In 1581 Philip was successful in asserting a somewhat doubtful claim to the throne of Portugal: the chief interest of the war to us is that it brought both Essex and Drake into Portuguese waters, in a rather half-hearted attempt to support his rival. The union of Spain and Portugal, which geography seems so clearly to dictate, was only to last for sixty years.

We have already spoken (see p. 192) of his successful war against Henry II, and shall have something to say of the influence which he exercised in Italy (see p. 218). The disastrous failure of the Armada belongs rather to English history (see p. 225): from Philip's point of view it had the nature of a crusade.

The one merit which can be claimed for Philip, as a statesman, is that, unlike several of his contemporaries, he was unswerving in his resistance to the Turks. He made several expeditions against the Barbary corsairs, at first with indifferent success, but in 1571 came the triumph of Lepanto (see p. 209). Even here, however, procrastination (not only on his side) had delayed the expedition so long that Cyprus, its primary object, was lost: dissensions

hampered the movements of the allies after victory, and though Don John took Tunis, Philip's jealousy refused to allow him to fortify it. It was lost a year later, and the terms which the Turks ultimately made were nearly as good as if Lepanto had been a Turkish victory.

There is no more tragic pair of sovereigns in history than Philip and Mary: the harm which she did to England passed away, but it is not fanciful to trace the rapid and remarkable decline of Spain to one of the most laborious monarchs who ever sat upon a throne. If, as seems probable, the Spaniards admired and loved him to the end (their name for him was Philip the Prudent), we are inexorably reminded of the prophet's words, "the people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?" He died in 1598, after long agony, borne with characteristic fortitude, unconscious (we may charitably hope) that the great days of Spain were over. His four marriages had left him but one son, and Philip III, "weak, fatuous and extravagant", was not the man to arrest the national decline (see p. 250).

Philip was a great builder, though the Escorial, his most characteristic achievement, is a gloomy monument of bad architectural taste. The Spanish costume and the Spanish style of literature spread widely through Europe, but the latter was extremely affected (its English name was Euphuism): the genius of Lope de Vega, El Greco and Cervantes is the most permanent memorial of Philip's name, but owed little to the monarch under whom they lived.

A NOTE ON CHIVALRY.—To say, as Byron did, that Cervantes "smiled Spain's chivalry away" is very misleading. "*Don Quixote* is a literary burlesque, not a satire on chivalry . . . nor a modern democratic assault on the gentle castles of romance". Cervantes himself, like Sir Philip Sidney, delighted to practise "the most hopelessly artificial kind of literature, the Arcadian pastoral romance".

In so far as chivalry "means simply high-flown notions of honour", they flourished vigorously in Spain and in England in the seventeenth century: "the cavalier ideal of Montrose is in many respects finer than the Elizabethan" and quite as chivalrous, though the knight errantry of Froissart and Chaucer had gone, and Don Quixote himself could not revive it. (W. P. Ker, *Don Quixote*.)

### Germany 1556-97

Charles V in his later years had tried to get his son Philip elected emperor and so to keep Spain and the Empire united: this was naturally resented by his brother Ferdinand I, who had been King of the Romans for twenty-six years, and had the result of making his son Maximilian concentrate on German interests. In Ferdinand's reign (1556-64) the interest is almost entirely

ecclesiastical, and he did his best to act as mediator between the two parties: it is the time of rapid growth of Protestantism. Maximilian II (1564-76) deserves the high praise of being the first European prince of any religion who refused to persecute (Stubbs, *Lectures on European History*, p. 173), declining either to attack the Protestants at the Pope's request, or to expel the Jesuits to please the Protestant princes. But in his later years the Counter-Reformation was beginning, and was to become active under his successors.

Rudolph II deserves notice not for his effect upon Germany, for during his long reign (1576-1612) he did extremely little, but for his extraordinary character. He was intelligent and learned, but after a few years lived the life of a recluse in Prague, spending his time with books, laboratories and museums, and taking his pleasure in the possession of a vast stud of beautiful horses which he never rode, and the platonic attentions of beautiful ladies, none of whom he ever married, having been told by an astrologer that he would be killed by a son of his own.

The only important event of his reign was the Pacification of Vienna (1606) which recognised the constitution and privileges of Hungary and promised to employ only Hungarian ministers in its service. This concession had been well earned by the Hungarians, who had been carrying on almost continuous and not unsuccessful warfare against the Turks.

Rudolph was a devout Catholic, and in his time a policy of repression was carried on against Protestants in Austria, but there was no bloodshed, and as the nobles on the whole were Protestant, little was accomplished. The situation changed radically when the Archduke Ferdinand (afterwards to be Emperor) took matters in hand in 1597: but his action and the events provoking it must be reserved for later treatment, as they were really the first stages of what became the Thirty Years War.

### *France 1559-98*

While Germany was being well and wisely governed by good rulers—for both Ferdinand and Maximilian deserve the name—France was miserably distracted by a series of wars carried on with little regard to principle and dominated, till her death in 1589, by Catherine dei Medici the Queen-mother, a woman devoid of principle herself but with some considerable skill in intrigue, which she devoted to the interests of her family.

Besides Catherine the other parties contending for influence

(which meant the control of the king) were the Bourbon princes, nearest in succession to the throne and Protestants, and the family of Guise, also of royal blood, headed by Duke Francis, the defender of Metz and captor of Calais, the most popular man in France, and his brother the Cardinal of Lorraine: their niece Mary (later to be known as Queen of Scots) was the young king's wife. Their views on religious matters were fundamentally Spanish and there was always a danger that this would affect their political attitude, but there were other opponents of Protestantism who put their country above their religion.

The finances of the country were in a deplorable state: Henry II had left debts amounting to forty-two millions of francs and an annual deficit of two and a half million. Revolution might well have followed: instead there was a series of religious wars, the only advantage of which was that they did not set class against class. Though nominally, and indeed fundamentally, these wars were religious, they were promoted by the personal jealousies and ambitions of the parties mentioned, Catherine, for example, now tolerating the Protestants from jealousy of the Guises, and now persecuting them in jealousy of the Bourbons. Nothing would be gained by an attempt to recount them in detail: it is enough to say that by 1577 there had been six struggles and six pacifications, almost identical in the rights which they allowed to the Protestants. Very roughly speaking, it may be said that the greater nobles and the official classes were Catholic and that their strength lay in the towns: they were the party of tradition and of centralisation: their military strength lay in their being able to recruit troops from Germany—even from Lutherans, who had little sympathy with the Calvinistic Protestants of France—and in the fact that Paris was always fanatically Catholic.

The Huguenots had no great nobles on their side except the Condé family: their strength lay rather in the smaller nobility and the professional and trading classes. Their main stronghold was between the Loire, the Rhone and the Pyrenees, but it was only in Eastern Languedoc, Dauphiné and la Rochelle that the majority of the population was on their side. Considering that they were internally divided, and probably never numbered more than a tenth of the population, it is surprising that they held their own so long; but they had able leaders in Condé and Coligny, and their cavalry was definitely superior to that of their enemies.

The Massacre of St. Bartholomew (August 24th, 1572) differs in

degree but not in kind from other acts of perfidy and violence committed in these wars. The occasion chosen was the festivities following the marriage of Henry of Navarre (of the House of Bourbon) to the king's sister, which brought many leading Protestants to Paris. The motive was Catherine's fear of Coligny, whose influence was then strong with the king and might have induced him to support the revolt in the Netherlands which was at the moment prosperous; she and the Guise family must share the responsibility. It is doubtful whether they meant to do more than kill Coligny and some other of the leaders, but they had put the match to the tinder, and the people of Paris (which, as we have said, was strongly Catholic) massacred at least 1,000 that night: in the provinces the numbers murdered were 10,000 at the lowest computation. The result of course delighted Catholic powers: the Pope struck a medal in honour of the occasion, it won from Philip II the rare tribute of a smile, and the Spanish envoy thanked God that "not a child has been spared": but, though it dashed the hopes of the Netherlands, it did little lasting damage to the Huguenot cause, and rallied to it some who disliked so Spanish a proceeding.

By 1577 Henry III, the last of Catherine's three sons, was on the throne, "a clever, cruel, abandoned, handsome, pitiful creature; the worst, perhaps, of his house, and, if so, the worst King of the worst family that ever reigned" (Stubbs, *op. cit.*, p. 235). By 1584 Henry of Navarre had become heir presumptive, and "the League" with Henry Duke of Guise at its head was formed by those determined to resist a heretic heir; it had the support of Philip of Spain, who feared that Henry of Navarre, if he became king, might join with England in supporting the Netherlands revolt, with which even the existing king had been coquetting, Henry III, after characteristically yielding to the League against his better judgment, as characteristically had the duke assassinated in 1588, and a Dominican, acting as the League's agent, avenged him by killing the king a few months later.

Henry of Navarre was now—though excommunicated by the Pope—the lawful king, and the various candidates proposed by the League or by Philip of Spain were lacking in popular appeal, so that Henry's position grew stronger. France was naturally tired of civil war, and it became clear that if he would accept Catholicism the game was in his hands. He had no strong religious convictions, but a real love of France and a justifiable belief in

himself. To him "conversion" was a matter of political expediency, and there was no doubt in which direction that pointed: as king, he could unite the country and secure good treatment for the Huguenots. Before the Battle of Ivry (1590) he had expressed his willingness to "receive instruction": by 1593 he professed himself converted, and next year he was anointed king.

Philip and the League still opposed him, but Elizabeth, to her great annoyance, was induced to spend £300,000 in his support, and the war ended in 1598 by the Peace of Vervins: in the same year the Edict of Nantes gave the Calvinists (but them alone) entire liberty in some seventy-five towns (but not in Paris or within five leagues thereof) and the right of private worship anywhere according to reformed rites: Protestants were to be admitted to the Universities and to all offices on equal terms with Catholics. It was a political settlement, not a concession of principle, but the Huguenots, who had become increasingly political, could not but accept it: they remained a sect, though a tolerated sect, and, as such, legally at the mercy of any king who might choose to revoke it.\* The Edict was really a treaty, and on the whole too favourable to the Protestants to be lasting: to give them fortified towns and the right of political assembly was, in effect, to make them a state within the State.

Henry's character and administration will come up for consideration later: he had been trained in a hard school since the days when he wandered, a barefoot and bareheaded boy, in the highlands of Navarre, and the lessons had been both good and evil. (Macdonald, *History of France*, II, p. 88.)

### *Italy 1550-1600*

In the last half of the sixteenth century Italy was entirely under Spanish influence: Philip, to whom Charles V had assigned the Duchy of Milan, was made in 1540 Imperial Vicar of Italy, and when by the Treaty of Cateau Cambresis (1559) (see p. 192) France renounced her Italian rights, Spain was supreme. There was no danger from within, for the old States were too jealous of one another, and of the upstart Medici Grand Duke in Florence, to be likely to unite, and the whole country had been so devastated by war that peace was their chief desire. Venice, as usual, was pursuing her own affairs, warring with the Turk, but unable to co-operate wholeheartedly with Spain, the only other Italian power

\* Though, till Richelieu's day, they had fortresses of their own.



ready to join her, for Spanish administration hampered her commerce. The only cheering fact was that Italy had ceased to be the battleground of Europe.

The only Italian state which pursued a far-sighted policy was Savoy, which realised the possibilities of its position as a guardian of the frontier: its Duke, Charles Emmanuel I (1580-1630), wisely preferred frontier valleys to fertile plains in the West, and by an exchange of territory with Henry IV in 1601 decided that Savoy was to be an Italian rather than a French power.

### *The Papacy*

With the exception of Paul IV (Caraffa) who, as we have seen, was violently anti-Spanish, the other Popes of the period were all glad to co-operate with Philip, and even Paul must have pleased him by strengthening the Inquisition, which his predecessor had re-established in Italy: a successor, Pius V (Ghislieri), strengthened it still further: we have now reached a period when the interests of religion were the first objects of the Popes—the era of the Counter-Reformation.

The Council of Trent (ended in 1563), which was the foundation of its success, must be looked at in view of the whole Conciliar movement. That movement had three main objects—to reform the Church in practice and in doctrine, and in particular to lessen the papal power. The Popes, on the other hand, while ready and indeed anxious to reform practice in the lower ranks of the ministry, were not prepared for any concessions in doctrine, and had no intention of surrendering their own authority. They were completely successful at Trent, but their success had the result of stabilising the disunion of Christendom and making their Church definitely a *Roman Catholic Church*.\* “The strong centralisation developed at Trent is the beginning of centralised bureaucracy throughout the civilised world (except in England) which lasted till 1789” (Figgis, *op. cit.*, p. 43). It was a triumph of the Latin mind.

We have seen how the emperors were insistent that the Council should not be held in Italy, and the choice of Trent, over its borders, was a concession to them; but by encouraging the divisions between the representatives of France and those of Spain

\* The change is shown in the altered meaning of the word Ultra-Montanism, which originally was applied to the zeal of Catholics north of the Alps; after the Reformation it came to mean the zeal of northern Catholics for Rome.

it was possible for Pius IV (1559-65) to secure an Italian majority. The result was to define various controversial doctrines, such as those concerning Indulgences, Purgatory, the Sacraments and Invocation of saints, with a new precision, and, generally speaking, to establish a uniformity in matters of faith which had been hitherto unknown. A new discipline was enforced on the inferior clergy, and recognised abuses swept away, but the position of the Popes and Cardinals remained unaffected, or rather, so far as the Popes were concerned, was immeasurably strengthened.

This was made possible by the complete change of quality which had come over the Papacy: since the days of Paul IV there had been no question of their personal character or of their complete honesty. Paul IV (1555-59), Pius V (1566-72), and Sixtus V (1585-90) were zealous, sometimes fanatically so, for the orthodox faith, and others like Pius IV (1559-65) and Gregory XIII (1572-85), though not personally men of zeal, pursued the same policy with vigour and success. They abolished nepotism, they reformed the papal court, they enforced discipline and improved the services of the Church. They could now offer to the world a cause clearly worth fighting for, and, in alliance with the orthodox princes of the day, set out to recover the ground lost to the heretics.

Their success was largely due to the support which they received from the Jesuits, whose amazing loyalty and discipline is beyond praise. Ignatius Loyola (1491-1556) was a young Spanish nobleman who, crippled by a wound, forsook a military career for the direct service of God. With four friends he formed a society at Paris in 1534, aiming at first at missionary work in the Holy Land, or, if not there, wherever the Pope might send them. War prevented their going, and in 1540 the Farnese Pope, Paul III, was with some difficulty persuaded to recognise the "Company of Jesus". Their leading principle was absolute and unquestioning obedience to their General, even if that conflicted with their own reason and conscience: though bound by the strictest vows, they wore no monastic habit and were excused from the more ascetic practices and even from the routine devotional exercises. They were an army of crusaders under military discipline, pledged to go to whatever task the Pope might choose "without any tergiversation or excuse": the record of their missionaries in Asia, such as St. Francis Xavier, is glorious. Within sixteen years the numbers of the Order had risen to 1,500 and their colleges had 6,000 pupils in

their charge: so great was the appeal made by the call to sacrifice everything for the greater glory of God: Loyola had but repeated the discovery of St. Francis. "The much abused morality of the Jesuits is only the most thoroughgoing form of an error which will probably exist, so long as it is possible for men to conceive great ends, and to be impatient of the hindrances to their accomplishment." (Figgis, *op. cit.*, p. 105.) Their task was to educate the young by teaching and the old by preaching and the confessional, but their most striking characteristic was the utter merging of all individuality in obedience to the Order.

Of their success it is needless to speak: as confessors of kings, as advisers of statesmen, as conspirators, as missionaries and as martyrs, they proved what such unselfish loyalty to a cause could effect, making converts, as Macaulay says, "where neither avarice nor curiosity had tempted any of their countrymen to enter" and preaching and disputing "in tongues of which no other native of the West understood a word." They earned—not quite undeservedly—an evil name for casuistry, and the danger of their doctrines is obvious, but as militant enemies of the chief Lutheran principles they were most formidable to the Protestants, and it is difficult to exaggerate their value to the papal cause. Both then and since, they have had their bitter critics: it was Lord Acton, the great Roman Catholic historian, who spoke of the "combination of a sense of duty, zeal for sacrifice, and love of virtue, with the deadly taint of a conscience perverted by authority, which made the Jesuits of the seventeenth century so odious to touch and so curious to study". (*Letters to Mary Gladstone*, p. 42.) But the papal cause had other support, open to no criticism, in the faithful lives of countless followers, for it must not be forgotten, because our narrative has dealt so much with the political activities of the Church and its failures, that its ordinary work was in many places being carried on with real devotion and success.

So formidable and united a body, backed by the powers of the Inquisition and the Index Expurgatorius (revised and strengthened after Trent), the Protestants were ill-equipped to meet. Their theologians were divided, for Lutheranism and Calvinism were far apart, and Lutheranism had difficulties of its own. Luther, as we have seen, in defiance of the Psalmist's warning, had put his trust in princes, some of whom were far from deserving it: unlike Calvin, or at least the Calvinists, he had serious scruples against the employment of force, and the very merits of his creed told

against it as a fighting power. Freedom may be a higher doctrine than submission to authority, but we have no need to be told which is the more immediately efficient, and the loyalty which centred round the Pope roused an enthusiasm to which, backed as it was by centuries of tradition, the Lutherans had nothing to oppose, except a haphazard organisation, the patronage of some questionable princes, and a noble but nebulous creed.

Catholicism, like Puritanism, its antithesis, may have sacrificed the wider interests of humanity to the requirements of religion, but if it lost in breadth it gained immensely in strength, and the clergy, now to be trained in seminaries, were effective agents in its warfare. Even those who sympathise most strongly with the fundamental principles of the Reformers, and see in the Jesuits much to blame as well as much to praise, cannot wonder at the rapid triumphs of the Counter-Reformation.\*

### *England 1558-1603*

The triumph of Elizabeth—for it was nothing less—can only be ascribed to genius deservedly aided by fortune. It required genius to realise, in the field of foreign policy, that England's interests were best served by avoiding, as far as possible, commitments on the Continent, and that the Reformation at home would work its way to a solution if authority was content to keep the ring and to urge both parties to moderation. But it was good fortune that these wise courses coincided with the queen's own temperament: she enjoyed holding a balance and keeping opposing forces in play, and a rare talent for dissimulation combined with a genuine instinct for moderation to serve the interests of the country which she loved.

The same characteristics appear in the smaller but very important question of her marriage: she enjoyed keeping her suitors in suspense and her advisers in ignorance, and was ready to surrender her own affections when she was convinced that to yield to them would harm the country. It was no false claim which she made when at her accession she said that she "desired from the bottom of her heart that she might have assistance of God's grace

\* "The analogy between the condition of the Papacy in the Counter-Reformation period and that of a besieged city is remarkably complete. Everything is there; the hasty reconstruction of dogmatic fortifications, the imposition of a strong centralised discipline, even the erection of formidable outworks and strong points by the creation of the new religious orders, especially the Company of Jesus, which from time to time would make determined and often effective sallies into the enemy's territory, while gradually becoming the dominant power in the fortress-citadel itself." (Jalland, *op. cit.*, p. 454.)

to be the minister of His heavenly will in the office now committed to her", and through all the tortuosities of her policy she kept England's best interests as her first care. She had her reward: words might truly be said of her which were spoken of a very different ruler that she was "first in peace" (which she laboured so long to preserve), "first in war" (when the occasion came) "and first" (at all times) "in the hearts of her countrymen". A critic, by no means blind to her personal defects, yet calls her "the spirit of England incarnate" (F. S. Oliver, *The Endless Adventure*, I). She was, indeed, that very rare creature, a bold and yet a cautious gambler: she gambled, in what we have learnt to call "the Elizabethan spirit", with the whole destiny of England—and she gambled with success.

It has been truly said that what Elizabeth gave to England was the priceless gift of time—time for the Established Church to find its feet, time for the new alliance with Scotland to grow firmer, time to breed the race of seamen who beat off the Armada, when peace could be kept no longer. " 'Now, Mr. Speaker', said Elizabeth once, 'what has passed in the Lower House?' 'May it please your Majesty, seven weeks'. In like manner what passed in Elizabeth's reign was chiefly forty years" (Seeley, *British Foreign Policy*, I, 248).

The dominating fact in foreign policy in this period is the antagonism, personal and national, between England and Spain: but, as both countries also hated France, which was nearer to both than either was to the other, it was in relation to France that their political attitude had to be decided. The Netherlands, however much their revolt might command English sympathy, were a secondary problem: we should gladly assist in troubling Spain in that quarter, if the result was not to the advantage of France: if France supported them, it was time for England to hold back. Elizabeth's refusal of the sovereignty of the Netherlands offered to her by the States General in 1585 has been rightly described as "the greatest negative event in English history". (*Ibid.*, I, 190.)

This inglorious policy can only be rightly estimated if we remember how weak England was at the time of Elizabeth's accession—weak in unity, for it was torn by religious feuds such as were soon to wreck France: weak in prestige, for under Mary it had been a mere handmaid of Spain: weak in financial credit and in warlike stores—clearly in no position to offer a direct challenge to Philip.

Fortunately, Philip had his problems too, based on the same fundamental reasons: little as he liked the heretical Elizabeth, the alternative was Mary Stuart, whose religious orthodoxy was outweighed by the fact that she was married to the Dauphin and soon to be Queen of France. Elizabeth was no more anxious than he to see French influence grow in Scotland, and to support the Reformation there would be to annoy both her enemies at once; so, persuaded by Maitland of Lethington, who aimed at perpetual friendship between the two countries, she made a prosperous beginning by helping them to expel the French in 1560. For the first time, England and Scotland had co-operated. The Reformed Church was established in Scotland before Mary, now a widow, came back next year to be Queen of Scots.

The French danger was over, but it had been overcome at the price of supporting a type of Reformed religion, Calvinism, which Elizabeth had no desire to see established in England, and John Knox, its leader, when he sounded his "blast of the trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women" did not limit his denunciations to his own queen. Later events, as we shall see, gave rise to dangers of a different kind.

Mary's marriage with Darnley, a great-grandchild, like his wife, of Henry VII, caused Elizabeth some anxiety as strengthening their joint claim to the English throne (for there were of course those in England who denied her own right to it), but his murder and Mary's third marriage to Bothwell lowered her reputation, and after being imprisoned in Scotland she fled to England, where Elizabeth kept her a prisoner: until her death, nineteen years later (1587), the politics of England, and indeed of Europe, centred round her prison.

These nineteen years were full of plots. The English Catholics intrigued with Philip, who was now beginning to be wholehearted in Mary's support: the Pope in 1570 excommunicated Elizabeth, which put her outside the pale: the Jesuits had begun from Douai in 1568 to take a special interest in England: Elizabeth's life was repeatedly threatened.\* In 1584 an Association was formed for her protection, undertaking to prosecute to the death any such plotter, or any one in whose favour such an attempt was made. In 1586 Mary was proved not only to have

\* In 1581 the Papal Secretary replied to an inquiry as to the lawfulness of assassination that "whosoever sends her out of the world with the pious intention of doing God service not only does not sin but gains merit". (Neale, *Queen Elizabeth*, p. 251.)

been privy to such a plot, but to have made over her claims on England to Philip of Spain.\* Her trial and execution followed next year.

The immediate result was that Philip, already embittered by losses to Spanish shipping, launched the Armada, the story of which is too famous to be retold to English readers: its real danger lay in the attempt, far from impossible though very risky without command of the sea, to take on board and transport to England the Spanish army waiting in the Netherlands under the Duke of Parma. The victory, piously ascribed to the winds of God, was really one of the new seamanship over the old: the English, thanks to King Harry, had the mastery in weight of gunmetal and were able to dictate the range at which the battle should be fought.† Though the war with Spain continued till Elizabeth's death (1603) its issue had been decided once for all, and the rule of the seas had begun to pass from the Mediterranean to the North, though it did not pass to England till after the battle of La Hogue (1692).

In one region alone Elizabeth's "foreign" policy was disastrous—in Ireland. Henry VIII had destroyed the monasteries there, and left it in disorder. The Jesuits and the Pope took advantage of the situation, and Elizabeth very reluctantly undertook the conquest of the island. This was carried out with great cruelty, and the English "colonists" sent over were largely gentleman adventurers, with no thought but to hold the people down. Hatred of the English inspired the Irish with a new devotion to their old religion, and Protestantism and racial ascendancy became identified, with results from which both islands are suffering still.

Let us turn from her only serious failure to what was perhaps her greatest success, the determining of the form which the English Reformation was to take, or if the phrase is preferred, the creation of Anglicanism. She inherited a very difficult task: the settlement reached under her father had been assailed by two violent and opposite reactions: the clergy were often uncertain where they stood, and, if they were certain, might be divided in two hostile camps. No fewer than nine sees were vacant: the quiet

\* Her will drawn up in 1577 contains the sentence "I cede and transfer and make donation of all my rights in England and elsewhere . . . to the Catholic King, or others of his family at his pleasure, with the advice and consent of His Holiness." (*Ibid.*, I, 157.)

† "It was at Gravelines that the victory was won, when Parma failed to bring up his flotilla." (*Ibid.*, I, 213.)

scholars had disappeared, and if they had gone into exile had usually returned as violent partisans with strong Calvinist views.

Elizabeth herself was conservative in her religious tastes: she disliked a married clergy: she liked a certain amount of ritual: she disliked the metrical psalms: she disliked long sermons: she liked to have a crucifix in her chapel. On the central point of religious controversy, the Sacrament, her view was expressed in the words

Christ was the Word and spake it,  
He took the bread and brake it,  
And what His word did make it  
That I believe and take it.

But, the queen being, as she proudly declared, "mere English", her main feeling, like that of her people, was that neither the Spanish nor the Italians, nor the Germans nor the Dutch, should be allowed the decisive voice in English religion. She was prepared to sacrifice her own inclinations, if she could find a middle path expressing the general conscience of her people, compatible with the right organisation of the Church and the maintenance of Catholic doctrine. For that object she strove, with the very inadequate material at her command.

She was fortunate in having, for her archbishop, Parker, who had not retired abroad nor absorbed the ideas of continental Protestantism. With his help she began the task and accomplished it in a way which, though far from satisfying either Calvinist or Romanist, did in fact come near to her ideal. Her English Church suffered much at first from "the slenderness of ministers and the nakedness of religion", but she kept the ship on an even keel, persecuting both Puritans and Romanists, when necessary, not for religion but for disloyalty: in the case of the latter, the plans for a papal invasion of England made such a course inevitable.

When the course of the Reformation in England is compared with that which it took in France, or with the proceedings of the Inquisition in Spain or those of Alva in the Netherlands, we can realise how much we owe to her. She used the "Royal Supremacy" (a phrase which she disliked) to protect and not to dominate the Church, was respectful to her bishops, and refused to allow their concerns to be discussed in Parliament. In so far as the Church of England owes its existence as such to any monarch, it is assuredly to Elizabeth and not to Henry VIII. The queen's influence was the decisive factor: "nothing is more certain than the general



distaste of Elizabethans for the Elizabethan settlement" (Feiling, *History of the Tory Party*, p. 26): but for her it would have been far less conservative.

She was well served by her ministers, the Cecils and Walsingham, as she deserved to be, and also, like her grandfather, by her Justices of the Peace, to whom her Poor Law gave plenty of work, and, whether she deserved it or not, she received the romantic affection of countless young adventurers who would run any risk to win Gloriana's smile. To tell of them one by one would be impossible and needless, as it would be to speak of the great names in Elizabethan literature from Surrey and Sidney to Spenser and Shakespeare—but a few words must be said of the sea rovers whose stories, told in the perfect English of the time, are one of the glories of her day.

There are some who doubt whether they were Christian heroes or pirates, and the surprising answer must be that they were not infrequently both.\* To make money by privateering was regarded with certainly no more moral disapproval than we regard a career in the City: it had been practised by the Knights of St. John with equal disregard of life and property, and our seamen had at least the excuse that, if they had not fought in the West for rights which Spain and the Pope denied them, England would have found herself excluded from world trade except in Europe. Elizabeth gave them her blessing, both from love of brave men and from sore need of money: the parsimony for which she is often blamed was not hers but Parliament's, for its "subsidies" continued meagre to the end.

And it was not only as privateers but as explorers and traders that the Elizabethan seamen served their country well. Drake was knighted for his three years' voyage round the world with 100 men in the *Golden Hind*; Frobisher and Davis left great names behind them, and if Hawkins dealt in slaves, the Muscovy Company, the Levant Company and the East India Company carried on a more legitimate traffic. They were very far from perfect, but Sir Richard Grenville sinking with the *Revenge* and Sir Humphrey Gilbert—"as near to God by sea as by land"—represent a type of Elizabethan manhood which we are right to hold in honour.

\* Hawkins, who carried slaves in a ship called the *Jesus*, took as his badge a black-moor holding up his hands in gratitude for his transference to a Christian land. This illustrates confused thinking but was not consciously blasphemous or dishonest. John Newton, the slave-trading hymn writer and friend of Cowper, showed a similar confusion of thought.

## CHAPTER XVI

### The Seventeenth Century: First Half

In the first half of the seventeenth century the history of Europe is really the history of France, Germany, England and Sweden. Spain is rapidly declining in power, and Italy under Spanish influence is sinking into the dignified seclusion of a museum piece: the most striking and not the least characteristic event in Italian history in this period is the recantation of Galileo, forced from him by Urban VIII in 1633: the Balkans are still under the paralysing sway of the Turks, who themselves are passing through a half-century of degeneracy and decline. New nations like the Dutch, and old ones like the Russians, are beginning to come into the picture.

For the four nations mentioned it is a time of great events. For Sweden, it saw supremacy in the Baltic assured for the time: in the others, two contests were being decided, the political and the religious, and the results were curiously different. In the political sphere, the French monarchy was immensely strengthened; in Germany one effect of the Thirty Years War was to ensure that the emperor, as such, could never be formidable again. In the sphere of religion, Protestantism was fatally weakened in France: in Germany it divided the field with Catholicism: in England a Republican Presbyterianism was in 1650 temporarily in command. But while in France and Germany the results were to endure, in England the struggle had only begun, and both king and Church were to enjoy their own again.

The names of Hohenzollern and of Romanoff begin to appear among the great ruling families of Europe.

Broadly speaking, it may be said that on the continent of Europe the political progress by no means kept pace with that of thought: thinkers were content to "challenge everything except the sanctions of the governments under which they lived" (Ogg, *Europe in the Seventeenth Century*, p. 1). The result was the development of despotic monarchies, which, irresponsible as they were, at least saved Europe from the rule of a still less responsible nobility. It was a choice between absolutism and anarchy. In France the wars of the Fronde show a nobility at its worst:

Richelieu suppressed twelve of the sixteen local governments which had given them their opportunity. Spain, in Burke's words, did not "possess the use but only the abuse of a nobility": in Poland the nobles (who, according to Madame de Motteville, had plenty of diamonds but no linen) not content with exploiting their own peasants, tried to exploit the Cossacks, and so robbed the country of invaluable allies against their many enemies: in Bohemia the nobles were the curse of the country, selfish and unpatriotic, despising both the bourgeoisie and the pious peasants, among whom the "Bohemian Brethren" found ready converts. In Germany few of the princes show any trace of constructive statesmanship, and the measureless disaster of the Thirty Years War "confirmed the narrow provincialism of the numerous petty states, made impossible the evolution of a national and distinctive culture such as the French, or the creation of a vigorous public opinion, as in England" (*ibid.*, p. 168): hence, in spite of her great men, great especially in metaphysics and in music, there arose that domination of the "herd instinct" from which Europe was later to suffer so grievously.

There is another, less spectacular, change which the seventeenth century was to see. The influx of American silver led to an enormous rise in the price level, so that kings, like lesser mortals, could no longer "live of their own": taxation, which they had used as an occasional tonic to their finances, became their very life-blood. Hence, rather than from any personal shortcomings, came the disputes between king and Parliament: the Revolution Settlement in England was one answer: the despotism of Louis XIV was the simpler solution in France.

### *Germany 1600-50*

The Thirty Years War is often described as the last of "the great wars of religion": to call it a "religious" war is no more true than it would be to describe our war with America as a "commercial" struggle. Religion supplied its occasion, but a consideration of those who took part in it will show the decisive part which other motives played. Of the chief actors, it is only for Gustavus Adolphus on the Protestant side that the claim can be made that religion was the main motive of his actions, and on the other only for Ferdinand II and Maximilian of Bavaria: even in Ferdinand's case we have to admit that other motives, such as the interests of the Hapsburgs, played at times so large a part as to try the loyalty

of the Catholic princes: nor was Gustavus forgetful of Swedish interests.

It is as absurd to regard Wallenstein as a Catholic crusader as to deny that most of the Protestant princes cared considerably more for personal profit than for religion, and the same is true of the foreign powers which at one time or another played a part. The King of Denmark, Christian, was seeking for German territory: the Dutch, though fervently Calvinist, fought not for Protestantism but against Spain: the Spaniards, though fervently Catholic, fought against France, and France, under the guidance of Richelieu, fought for objects which were purely French. Even Bernhard of Weimar, Gustavus's able successor on the battlefield, had his eye on a hereditary Duchy, under French protection, in Alsace—a district which, by perhaps the most important territorial change brought about by the war, now became French for more than 200 years.

A war between such antagonists was a better school of military strategy and tactics than of political principle: in its course Gustavus revolutionised the art of war by matching mobility against the old system of weight—"a lesson of peculiar interest to a nation like ours whose strength is to fight in line"—and a great school of French Marshals received that training in warfare which was to make possible the conquests of Louis XIV.\*

The general cause which led to the Thirty Years War was the failure by both sides to observe the agreement made at Augsburg in 1555 (see p. 197). Its so-called "Ecclesiastical reservation" had been intended to restrain the Protestants from acquiring more of the property of the Church and in particular the control of the great sees: the Declaration of Tolerance had guaranteed them full religious freedom wherever they lived. In defiance of this arrangement, bishops who had renounced the Pope were being allowed to remain in office, and Protestant princes elected to the government of ecclesiastical states: conversely, in some parts, notably in Austria, Protestant services were forbidden except for limited numbers, and their teachers banished or imprisoned. The Protestant rulers plundered, while the Catholic rulers persecuted: the compromise had clearly broken down.

Protestantism, a Northern and a Saxon product, was strongest

\* Among the reforms which Gustavus introduced were the shortening of the pike, the arrangements for obtaining rapid and continuous fire, the restoration of shock action for cavalry, the provision of light mobile artillery, the insistence on the flintlock instead of the matchlock, and the provision of surgeons for the army.

in Saxony and the North, and through history Northern and Southern Germany, Saxony and Bavaria (and Austria) had tended on all matters to take opposite sides. The reason why this particular war happened at this particular time was that the South had two able and determined leaders, Ferdinand II of Austria and Maximilian of Bavaria, both strong supporters of the Counter-Reformation, but the struggle was by no means purely religious and the provocation by no means only on one side.

It would be tedious to do more than indicate its general course. Broadly speaking, it may be said that the Catholics were at their best in adversity while the Protestants were paralysed by it, whereas the Catholics were always liable to make an immoderate use of their successes. It may be added that the Peace which ended the war—a Peace which had then been under discussion for more than five years—gave neither party the objects for which it had contended.

The war falls into five stages, the first centring round Bohemia, the second spreading to Germany, the third that in which Christian of Denmark is decisively beaten by Wallenstein, the fourth beginning with the appearance of Gustavus Adolphus and ending with the Peace of Prague (1635), and the last, or French, phase covering the thirteen years till the Peace of Westphalia in 1648.

In order to understand why Bohemia was the first storm-centre we must glance at the domestic history of the Hapsburgs. The virtuous but absurd Rudolph II had been pushed aside by his ambitious brother, Matthias, who in turn was edged out of power by Ferdinand, Archduke of Styria, his cousin and ultimate heir. Before Matthias died in 1619 Ferdinand, as King Designate of Bohemia, had begun a policy of persecution there,\* and the Protestant Union, a body formed by the Calvinist Princes of the Empire some ten years before (and countered by a similar Catholic league), gave armed support to a revolt. At this moment the vacancy in the imperial throne occurred.

There were three Protestant electors and three Catholic, the casting vote being held by Bohemia: if Ferdinand was still king there, there was a Catholic majority, for he would clearly give his vote (as he did) for himself: but the rebels had declared him deposed and the Protestant Electors had strong cards to play: they

\* This was in defiance of a promise given to the emperor, and led to the celebrated "defenestration of Prague" when two of his agents were thrown from a window in the Capital.

threw them away through their mutual jealousy and acquiesced in his election. But troubles were only beginning. Ferdinand was elected emperor in August, but in September Frederic the Elector Palatine (influenced, it is said, by his beautiful wife, James I's daughter) accepted the throne of Bohemia.\*

The first, or Bohemian, phase of the war was short and decisive. Frederic, who was entirely spiritless, received no effective support except from a revolutionary party in Hungary: the Lutheran princes, who disliked his Calvinism, were quite lukewarm, and Ferdinand, who was the reverse, had no difficulty in reconquering Bohemia in a year, and sending the "Winter King" back to his Palatinate. Bohemia, as a state, disappeared from the map of Europe, only to rise again in our own day as Czecho-Slovakia: by the end of the war, only a sixth of its villages were left and only a quarter of its population. Ferdinand, whose position had at one time seemed desperate, threatened as he was by Protestants in Austria and rebels in Hungary, had won a well-deserved triumph.

But he misused it, not only by the savage punishment which he gave to Bohemia, but by putting Frederic and the Princes of Brandenburg and Anhalt under the Ban of the Empire, thereby announcing his intention of destroying the Protestant Union, a step well calculated to unite the very people by whose disunion he had profited, and to alarm Protestants in other countries. Here begins the second stage of the war.

In 1623 he succeeded in getting Frederic's dignity of Elector transferred to the other branch of the Wittelsbachs in the person of Maximilian of Bavaria. The result (delayed by the futile optimism of Frederic's father-in-law James I) was the formation in 1625 of a league of England, Denmark and Venice to resist the emperor and recover the Palatinate for Frederic: Savoy, France, Holland and Sweden were known to be sympathetic with their aims. It was not religion which united these motley allies, but jealousy of the growing power of the House of Hapsburg, and, in the case of the Northern powers, fear for the valuable Baltic trade; and the war now changes its character.

The third phase begins in 1624 when Christian of Denmark takes the lead with little help except subsidies from England. The Catholic League, on which Ferdinand had hitherto relied, was by no means enthusiastic for Hapsburg power, however zealous it

\* Her beauty lives in Wotton's famous lines beginning "Ye meaner beauties of the night".

might be for the Faith: to him the two causes were identical, and so at this moment he secured the services of that wonderful character Wallenstein, who was entirely in sympathy with his master's dreams of an Austria which should dominate Europe from the Baltic to the Adriatic and with the help of Spain and the Pope impose Catholicism on Europe; though, as he was not himself an ardent Catholic, the latter part of the programme made a less personal appeal.

Wallenstein, financier, general, statesman, patriot, half Lutheran half Jesuit by education, a mystic whose ambition was directed by a belief in his own star—had a character as remarkable as his career. Head of an army raised at his own expense, he brought Ferdinand in four years to the pinnacle of glory and accepted from him a Duchy and the proud title of "General of the Oceanic and Baltic Seas". Dismissed a year later, thanks to Richelieu's intrigues with the Catholic League, he was recalled to meet Gustavus Adolphus and slew him at Lützen (1632) to be dismissed in 1635 by the master whom he had served so well, and assassinated, if not by his order, at least not without his approval.

We have no space to tell of his first achievements against Christian, King of Denmark, whose motives were partly religious and partly based on a fear of the Baltic schemes of Ferdinand and Wallenstein. The Danish force, supported by English gold, was quite unable to resist him, but once more Ferdinand overplayed his hand, or rather showed his cards too plainly. By an edict in 1629, signed without consultation with the Catholic League, he ordered the restoration to the Church of all land secularised in the last eighty years, which included the property of two archbishoprics, a dozen bishoprics and more than a hundred smaller foundations, giving the property of the convents not to its former owners but to the Jesuits. Wallenstein was to enforce the edict. At the same time Ferdinand drew nearer to Spain, and adopted Spanish methods in Bohemia. The Edict of Restitution was a challenge to all Europe, for Ferdinand's "pan-German" schemes were known, and Wallenstein had suggested that the Empire should be made hereditary in the Hapsburg family. None of these things greatly pleased the Catholic League, who were jealous of Wallenstein, and did not share his desire to see the imperial power increased. Richelieu saw his opportunity, and the unscrupulous intrigues of Father Joseph, whose piety was completely divorced

from political morality, by working on their disaffection, succeeded in getting Wallenstein dismissed at the very moment when Gustavus Adolphus, the Empire's most dangerous enemy, was landing in Pomerania. The Cardinal and the Capuchin had struck a shrewd blow for the Protestant cause.

The fourth and most dramatic stage of the war now begins. Gustavus Adolphus, strangely underrated both by his enemies and by those whom he came to help, had landed in Pomerania before Wallenstein's fall: the Electors of Saxony and Brandenburg were lukewarm, if not hostile, playing, as usual, for their own hand.\* His victories were not long in convincing both parties of his importance. He was too late (thanks to Brandenburg's suspicions) to save Magdeburg from Tilly, Ferdinand's general, and it was sacked with unspeakable savagery, but he utterly defeated him at Breitenfeld, killed him at the crossing of the Lech next year, and overran Bavaria.

These events and the alliance at last made between the Swedes and John George of Saxony (a drunken, obstinate Lutheran, who had hitherto been loyal to the emperor) had forced Ferdinand to recall Wallenstein (whose astrologers had told him he would fall to rise again) and he came back on his own terms, which included absolute authority over his army. The two great generals were not unequally matched: for a long time they watched each other, to meet in battle at last at Lützen in Saxony where Gustavus was killed, and Wallenstein defeated, though the battle was won by Bernard of Weimar after the king was dead (1632).

So died at the age of thirty-seven a prince perfectly honest and transcendently able, described by an historian not given to exaggeration "as a champion and deliverer true, wise, pure and noble", "scaling", as he said in his last moments, "the religion and liberty of the German nation with my blood": with him all moral and religious idealism died out of the war. Wallenstein survived him little more than a year. The Catholic princes had always hated him, both for his arrogance and ambition and for a suspicious tolerance which he showed to the Protestants, with whom indeed their suspicions encouraged him to treat. The astrologers, who had told him that the stars on the day of Lützen were hostile to Gustavus, failed to warn him of his own danger: the emperor

\* It must not be forgotten that Gustavus had political as well as religious aims: for Ferdinand to take Stralsund would be a menace to Swedish shipping, and he invaded Germany to anticipate an attack: "Either we must go and find the Emperor at Stralsund, or he will come and find us at Kalmar".



had ordered him to be taken dead or alive, and he was murdered by an Irish officer in 1634.

The fifth and final or French stage of the war can be left till we are dealing with that country: a Peace with Lutherans made at Prague (1635), by which Saxony rejoined the emperor and pledged itself to expel the Swedes, was countered by a treaty between the Swedes and Richelieu in the same year, and the war went on, till the population of the Empire had fallen from more than 16,000,000 to less than 6,000,000, and a third of its land had fallen out of cultivation. Ferdinand II died in 1637, having just obtained the election of his son, another but weaker Ferdinand, as King of the Romans. He was an able and honest man, inflexibly just where his religion was not concerned. He deserves all honour for his singleness of heart, but his complete intolerance has earned him the title of "the crowned Jesuit". This failing apart—and it is a failing which was largely responsible for the Thirty Years War—he had a character far higher than that of his German, Danish or French opponents.

It only remains to summarise the terms on which it was finally ended. It was provided that Calvinism and Lutheranism should henceforth be treated alike: that Church property secularised before 1624 should so remain, but all later acquisitions should be restored and no new ones made: that such freedom of religion as had been conceded at Augsburg should exist except in the hereditary dominions of Austria. The constitution of the Empire was redrawn in a way which severed its connection with Rome,\* greatly weakened the emperor's power, and, by making the electors and princes practically absolute, forced Germany "to drink to the dregs the cup of feudalism" (Bryce). The independence of the Swiss Federation and Holland was formally recognised.

Of the participants, Sweden received Western Pomerania, the Bishopric of Bremen (commanding the Elbe and the Weser) and a seat in the Diet; Brandenburg was given Eastern Pomerania and the Magdeburg region; Bavaria retained the electoral vote taken from poor Frederic, and also the Upper Palatinate (the region round Nuremberg), but Frederic's son, now ruling the Lower Palatinate, had an eighth vote created for his benefit and became an Elector again: but the greatest and clearest gains went to France, whose rights to the three Bishoprics Metz, Toul and

\* Pope Innocent X denounced this article in a bull as "*irrita, invalida, iniqua, iniusta, damnata, reprobata, inanis, viribusque et effectu vacua*".

Verdun, were allowed, while she received Alsace (except Strasburg) and all its dependencies in full possession. The Austrian House gained only the right to exclude the Reformation from its borders. It was a strange and somewhat impotent result of a war which had begun about the right of Bohemia to elect an incompetent Calvinist king.

### *France 1598-1648*

Henry IV (1589-1610) was called by Mme de Stael "the most French King who ever sat on the French throne". Like Elizabeth, he knew and loved his people and was loved by them. Like her, he could be trusted to put the interests of his country first, and his faults were of a kind which Frenchmen find it easy to forgive.

He knew, in his own words, that France "needed a breathing space", and that breathing space it was his first object to give her: the middle classes were sick of faction fights carried on in the name of religion, and looked, as France had always done, to the Crown to give them quiet and security. The Crown was, indeed, their only hope, for the States-General was paralysed by internal quarrels between its three Houses whenever it met, and the Parlement de Paris was only a corporation of lawyers with no rights except a temporary veto on the king's edicts.

Henry was equal to the task: he found a great minister, Sully, and, though their temperaments were very unlike, supported him consistently. Between them they secured an administration which, while abolishing much illegal taxation, paid off an enormous debt, balanced the national accounts, and left a handsome surplus for their successors. It is true that they left untouched some of the more oppressive taxes—notably the Gabelle, by which the Government decided how much salt each citizen required and sold it to him at its own price—but they introduced a new honesty into a very corrupt system. By this, and by the encouragement they gave to agriculture and to industry (though this did not greatly appeal to Sully), they deserve the title of joint founders of the national greatness. While Sully was repairing roads and bridges and inaugurating canals, Henry was looking further afield by making commercial treaties with England and Holland, and by encouraging colonisation. Champlain founded Quebec in 1608.

But foreign policy was Henry's special sphere, and, like a true Frenchman, he knew the Austro-Spanish house to be the enemy. He began that policy of close attention to the Eastern frontier

which has dominated French diplomacy ever since. By a treaty of alliance with Savoy he prepared a way into Italy, where the Hapsburgs were vulnerable: whether he meant to use it as the Valois kings had done, must remain uncertain, but his treaty anticipates that which Louis Napoleon was one day to make with Cavour.

That was all which he in fact accomplished, but at the moment of his death (1610) he was setting out to attack the Hapsburgs at the head of an alliance embracing England, the United Provinces, the German Protestant Union, Venice and Savoy. The nominal object was to protect the rights of the Lutheran claimants to some Duchies on the Rhine, which the Emperor Rudolph had denied: the real immediate object was to keep the Hapsburg armies from establishing themselves on that river: it was a French edition of the *Wacht am Rhein*.

Henry's ultimate plans no doubt went further still, though it must remain uncertain how far the Great Design, attributed to him by Sully, was more than a vague dream. But it is so interesting in itself that it is worth recording.

It involved what may be called a League of Nations: there were to be fifteen of them: the Empire, France, Spain, Hungary, Great Britain, Lombardy, Bohemia, Poland, Sweden, Denmark, Venice, the Papal States, Switzerland, the United Provinces and the Italian commonwealth. To produce equality, Bavaria was to have the Empire, the Pope Naples, the Venetians Sicily, the Duke of Savoy Milan with the title of King of Lombardy, the Swiss Franche Comté and Alsace. The whole Netherlands were to be united. A confederate senate was to be elected to decide international quarrels, and all were to join in a plan for extinguishing the Turks: there was to be universal freedom of trade and religious toleration. It is clear that the scheme was wholly impracticable at the time, involving an agreement which there was no chance of obtaining, and its defects are palpable. If Henry ever contemplated a general war for these ends, he was mad, and his murder by Ravaillac, two days before the Rhine campaign was to begin, saved him from a great sin and Europe from a great calamity.\* It is probable that it was only an imaginative sketch by a great king, (or perhaps a great minister), of a very remote possibility, and as such it has great interest.

\* "The Cardinal of Toledo, on hearing the news of the murder, said in the Spanish Council, 'If God be for us, who can be against us?'" (Seeley, I, 284.)

The solid core of purpose beneath the Design was clearly the weakening of the Hapsburg House, and the safeguarding of the Eastern frontier: that part of Henry's plan was to be successfully pursued during the next century by men who had none of his altruism or imagination but were solely and successfully bent on the aggrandisement of France.

Four days before his death Henry attended a service at St. Denis for the coronation of his second queen, Marie dei Medici (his divorced wife Margaret of Valois was also present). He said, we are told, to a man at his side that he was "wondering how this scene would appear if this were the Last Day, and the Judge were to summon us all before Him". At that Judgment Henry will have many sins to answer for: but he can at least claim that he had given France some twenty years of peace and good government, and that not since St. Louis had they had a king who loved and served his people better.

Marie dei Medici, as regent for Louis XIII (1610-43), reversed her husband's policy, and brought about a double marriage with Spain, wedding Louis to Anne of Austria, Philip III's daughter, and her own daughter to his son and heir. Her seven years' regency and those which followed showed that there were two domestic problems which called for solution: the Huguenots were beginning to dream of a Protestant republic in the South of France, and the nobles, by their factiousness, were showing that they needed, and perhaps deserved, a Richelieu to restrain them.

He came into power in 1624, and, till he died in 1642 (Louis following him a few months later), the history of the reign is that of the great minister. The objects which he set before him, and with the king's steady support achieved, were those which French royal policy was for a century to pursue, the domination of the Crown, the disablement of the nobles as a political force, religious uniformity at home, the strengthening of the frontiers and the advance to the Rhine. It was Henry's policy, though pursued by different methods and in a different spirit.

Under Henry the Crown was strong because it was loved, under Richelieu because it was feared. He created a civil service of professional men of the middle class, entirely dependent on royal favour, and royal commissioners, or *intendants*, ruled the provinces: it was a system very unlike that of the Tudors, whose Justices of the Peace were reasonably independent country gentlemen and did not profess to rule their neighbours: his secret service

was very efficient and the whole government was rapidly centralised.

Though Henry had no intention of allowing the nobles, or anyone else, to hamper his authority, he proceeded by gentle means: he was ready to say to them, as he said to the Parlement de Paris when it objected to registering the Edict of Nantes, "Do it because I ask you: you will be acting not only for me, but also for yourselves and for the sake of peace". Richelieu's methods, perhaps inevitably, were very different: in his time the victims sentenced to death for political offences included five dukes, four counts, and a Marshal of France. Their castles were destroyed by an edict ordering the destruction of all fortified places not on the frontier, their political power transferred to royal *intendants* and a professional army formed, in the infantry of which they, for many years, considered it beneath their dignity to serve.

With the Huguenots Henry naturally had a sympathy which Richelieu was far from feeling: under him they would not have dreamt of rising, but since his death they had felt the need to protect themselves, and had organised themselves in a way which was definitely a threat to French unity. Their rising, in spite of half-hearted aid from the incompetent Buckingham, was suppressed in 1628, and their great stronghold La Rochelle lost its independence as well as its fortifications.

Though resolute, Richelieu was not vindictive in the hour of victory: the Huguenots were allowed liberty of conscience, but with their fortresses razed, their organisation gone, and their right of meeting denied, they were left easy victims for the future.

His domestic objects had been successfully achieved, and if the wars of the Fronde were to show that the nobility was not finally crushed, it may be held that he had ensured their defeat: his only definite failure was in the realm of finance, for taxation rose steeply and corruption raised its head again: there were peasant risings, and the cruelty with which they were suppressed showed that Richelieu treated poor and rich alike. There was some truth in the criticism of one of his bitterest enemies, "Il avait foudroyé plutôt que gouverné les hommes".

His foreign policy we have already seen in action, for, though he did not live to see the Peace of Westphalia, the terms were really of his making. His support of the Protestant cause, and in particular of Sweden, began in 1631 with a large sum of money

and an annual subsidy: like other people, he underrated Gustavus at first and found him at times a difficult ally, but his value was soon obvious: after his death Richelieu assumed the direction of affairs and in 1635 declared war against Spain, thereby showing that it was the House of Hapsburg, not the Empire, which was his real enemy, and the frontiers of France his real concern. He put four armies into the field, and, though they were at first unsuccessful and were only saved in the Rhineland by the Swedes, his soldiers—and even more his generals—were learning their trade. Neither the French nor the Swedes trusted each other, but each found the other indispensable.

Of the morality of his policy it is needless to speak. Machiavelli has had no apter pupils than Richelieu and Father Joseph setting Maximilian against Ferdinand, Ferdinand against Wallenstein, and both against Spain, and bribing Gustavus for the sake of their "common friends" the Protestants. To both the service of France was a cause greater than any other: and when Richelieu hurried to his friend's deathbed with the words "Courage, père Joseph! Breisach est à nous!" he could have offered him no more acceptable viaticum.\*

The Spanish war also began ill and ended well: a Spanish fleet (thanks to Richelieu) was beaten in the Downs: revolts broke out in Portugal and Catalonia. Richelieu did not live to see the victory of Rocroi in 1643, when Condé finally dispelled the legend that the Spanish infantry was invincible, by breaking the "hedgehog" of pikes, but once more it was his policy which triumphed at the Peace of the Pyrenees in 1659 and made the southern frontier safe. He had, by ruthless methods, made France a compact, secure and very formidable power: had his successors not neglected the navy which he began to foster she would have been more formidable still.

Mazarin from 1642 to 1661 continued Richelieu's policy, and, as we have seen, reaped the fruits of it at the Peaces of Westphalia (1648) and the Pyrenees (1659), but the two men were extremely different. Richelieu had been a Frenchman, Mazarin was an Italian, Richelieu was incorruptible, Mazarin was bent on building up a private fortune: Richelieu was supported by a king's full authority: Mazarin was at first the guardian of a child

\* It is impossible to pass an impartial judgment on the "Grey Eminence": it can only be said that if Stevenson had pictured Dr. Jekyll as an ascetic mystic it would have been thought a piece of very bad taste: but truth is proverbially stranger than fiction.

monarch, and later only the favourite (and possibly the husband) of the Queen Mother. The policy of the government becomes "meaner, pettier and more timid", in contrast to "the strong, ruthless, thoroughly prosaic and business-like precision" which had marked the earlier regime (Stubbs, *op. cit.*, p. 392).

It is not surprising that after five years of Mazarin's rule (1643-48) the forces which Richelieu had suppressed broke out once again, and distracted France for five years more (1648-53): it is more surprising, and no mean tribute to his skill, that he was able to return to power till his death eight years later.

Nothing could be gained by a detailed account of the various *Frondes* \*—the Fronde of the Parlement, a movement of the upper middle class, demanding useful reforms such as the reduction of the *taille* and the abolition of *intendants*, had to rely on the Parisian mob and to appeal to the nobles, and passed into the Fronde of the Princes. It soon became a mere faction fight, in which Condé is found fighting against Turenne, and both at intervals against France. This was indeed the real danger: France was at war with Spain for twelve years after the Peace of Westphalia: the disloyalty of the princes paralysed her just at the time when the English Civil War was reaching its climax. In the end loyalty to the Crown outweighed hatred of Mazarin, and Louis came back to Paris in triumph, never to forget what he had suffered from the Parlement, the Parisian mob and the intrigues of the nobles. The French have always had a curious liking both for strong government and for anarchy: having tried the latter, they were now to try the former for a century.

The patriotic Englishman may with legitimate pride reflect that in those days we were conducting a revolution on different and better lines: but he may also remember that we put to death a statesman who was far more patriotic than Mazarin, and a king who was personally a far better man than Louis XIV.

### *England 1600-49*

The reign of James I (1603-25) is chiefly remarkable for what might have occurred in it. We *might* have found ourselves actively involved in the Thirty Years War: we *might* have been reunited by a marriage alliance with Spain: we *might* have settled our religious difficulties by a reasonable agreement with the moderate Puritans:

\* The name comes from the word *frondeur*, which means a slinger, a comparatively respectable hooligan.

and, finally, both king and Parliament *might* have perished in the Gunpowder Plot.

For the non-fulfilment of the last possibility James is clearly not responsible, but the other three were definitely affected by his personality, whether for good or evil. The country was full of sympathy for his beautiful daughter Elizabeth, and for her husband (whom we called the Palsgrave): so was James himself, but his innate caution stood him and us in good stead. We had no army, and Parliament, as in later days, while full of bellicose sentiments, was very unwilling to vote the money needed to make them effective. James himself had neglected the Navy, and is largely responsible for its impotence for half a century.

The Spanish marriage was the king's own idea: it is characteristic of that confused thinking which passed with him for statesmanship that, having married a daughter to the leading Calvinist, he should wish to marry his son into the house which stood most clearly for Rome; \* but, as the project miscarried (to be replaced by an equally unfortunate marriage alliance with France), it need detain us no longer.

But there was a real opportunity of settling the religious question at the Hampton Court Conference in 1604, and it is mainly due to James that it was missed. The Puritan demands were not excessive, being mainly for the omission of certain ceremonies which they (curiously) thought superstitious, and for more provision for preaching, which was obviously right. The wisest representatives of the Church, like Lancelot Andrewes, Bishop of Winchester, who was always courteous to the Puritans (as he was to Roman Catholics), were quite prepared to discuss their difficulties in a friendly spirit. But James, who had suffered from Presbyterian divines in Scotland, was utterly intolerant, and threatened to "harry them out of the land". The result was that the moderate Puritans, then a considerable body, were driven into the arms of their extremists, who wished to abolish bishops and all set forms of prayer: 300 Puritan clergy were driven from their livings. James is the true nursing father of English Nonconformity.

This was not the end of his disservice to the Church: the bad character of his Court, which was both drunken and corrupt, gave the Puritans a moral as well as a religious grievance, and the Church suffered in reputation from its association with him. When

\* He may have believed that religion need no longer determine national policy, in which case he was not "confused" but mistaken.



Parliament, which was strongly Puritan (especially after the Gunpowder Plot), began its attacks on the bishops, it could accuse them not only of being papistical (which was absurd) but of being indifferent to morality. It was a heavy price to pay for the support of a conceited and intolerant king, and part of the price is still being paid to-day.\*

There is yet another unfulfilled possibility on which it is interesting to dwell for a moment: Henry, James's eldest son, who died in 1612, refused to contemplate a Catholic marriage: had he lived, the history of England might well have taken a different turn, and Henry IX have won fame as a Protestant champion by the side of Gustavus Adolphus.

The king's dealings with the House of Commons were such as might have been expected. He forced into the open the question as to the respective rights of Parliament and the Throne which wise monarchs like Elizabeth had preferred to leave open and Englishmen are naturally unwilling to discuss: by declaring that Parliament had "merely a private and local wisdom", he raised the thorny problem of the Divine Right of Kings: by attempting to curb its liberty of discussion, he provoked it to revive the formidable weapon of impeachment, first employed against Francis Bacon, the Lord Chancellor. He was, in fact, a disastrous king, expert at raising controversies which he had not the judgment to decide nor the authority to settle: he was merely learned, at a time when the situation called for wisdom. It is not surprising that he left his son to face a very dangerous situation—a Parliament and a people critical and suspicious, the one of the policy, the other of the character, of the Court: a navy neglected: a foreign policy unsettled: handicapped by an incompetent minister and an unpopular bride. With all his undeniable virtues, Charles was ill-equipped for so tremendous a task.

It is remarkable that this undistinguished reign saw England for the first time taking a leading place in the intellectual life of Europe. It was long before Shakespeare was known abroad, but Bacon's exhortation to study Nature soon began to have its effect: so, in a narrower sphere, did Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood in 1624. The name of the "Royal Society", founded

\* It is often forgotten that Laud was only enforcing (without much discretion) the law of the Church as James left it: he assuredly did not burn heretics, as his Puritan predecessor had done in 1612. To say (as Fisher does) that he was no more liberal than Ignatius Loyola or the Duke of Alva is a curious injustice, and his latest biographer is entirely out of sympathy with any of the objects which he had at heart.

in Charles II's reign, was later to do honour to the Stuart House.

The name of another great Englishman does James but little credit. Walter Raleigh, a true Elizabethan seaman, a poet, a chemist and an historian—a man remembered wherever tobacco is smoked or potatoes eaten—after languishing for thirteen years in the tower on an unproved charge of treason, begged his freedom to seek for a gold mine on the Orinoco. Ill-health and ill-fortune ruined his enterprise, and he was involved in fighting with the Spaniards: James, at the moment coquetting with Spain, yielded to the Ambassador's demands for his life, and he was executed in Palace Yard—a quarter of a mile from the scaffold to be erected some thirty years later for James's unhappy son.

Raleigh undoubtedly wished to provoke a war with Spain, in the true Elizabethan tradition, and James must have known it; his muddled mind was quite capable of toying with this idea at the very moment when he was planning a Spanish marriage.

The sailing of the *Mayflower* and the founding of Virginia in 1607 are indeed the most notable events of James's reign. Virginia marks an epoch in the history of colonisation, for it did not represent, in its later stage, a search for gold mines, like the colonies of Spain, nor a commercial enterprise, like the Dutch colonies, but a real attempt to found a State into which English institutions could be transplanted. The *Mayflower* carried those who believed that "God had yet more truth to break forth from His Holy Word" and were denied the right to pursue that search at home. It is curious that while they admitted no principle of religious toleration themselves, they depended on, and received in New England, toleration from the government at home; which similarly countenanced the establishment of a Catholic colony of Maryland (called after Henrietta Maria by Lord Baltimore). Paradoxically, the Calvinist States of New England, where religious discipline was intolerably strict, began to be regarded as the home of religious freedom.

### *Charles I (1625-49)*

It may be assumed that readers are familiar with the main events of the struggle which marked this reign, and a brief summary is all that is needed. Charles quarrelled with three Parliaments in the years 1625-28, their reasonable suspicions causing them to refuse his not unreasonable demands (this is the period of

Buckingham's influence): he then reigned for eleven years without a Parliament (the period of Strafford and Laud): 1637 is the year of two protests, Hampden's against ship-money and that of the Scots against the new Prayer Book.\* Parliament was summoned in 1640, to provide money for the Scottish war—a Parliament which was to exist in one form or another till 1660. Strafford was executed in 1641 and the war began next year, after Charles's attempt to arrest the five members: its decisive battles were at Marston Moor (1644) and Naseby (1645), both won by Cromwell's army: Charles surrendered to the Scots in 1646, was sold by them to Parliament, escaped to Carisbrooke in 1647, but remained a prisoner till his execution in 1649.

Having paid this somewhat perfunctory tribute to the events, we can proceed to deal at somewhat greater length with the principles and persons involved.

Charles had inherited all the Stuart stubbornness and none of the Tudor tact, and it was unfortunate that his two chief counsellors understood the English character as little as he did himself or as his father had done before him. Strafford believed that the people desired, or at any rate would tolerate, a benevolent autocracy: he laughed at their "vain flatteries of imaginary liberty" as he did at the Common Law, as represented by "Sir Edward Coke and his Year Books". A more dangerous heresy still, he did not believe in the omniscience of Parliament, which he knew from the inside. He would have called it a "fatal drollery" if the phrase had then been invented: in short, he aimed to do for Charles what Richelieu was doing for Louis XIII.

It cannot be denied that it was a true instinct which led Parliament to regard him as its most dangerous enemy, whatever may be thought of their method of proceeding by attainder, which excused them from the necessity of proving his guilt.† His pride, and the cruelty which disfigured his masterly rule in Ireland, are as unquestionable as his greatness, or as the generosity which made him beg the king to save himself by sacrificing him. Clarendon, who did not love him, says that "many of the standers-by who had not been overcharitable to him were much affected by the

\* It may be mentioned that it was not in itself unreasonable that Buckinghamshire should help to support the navy (which, however, supported Hampden's protest against ship-money being levied without Parliament's consent); and that the main objection to the Scottish Prayer Book (which was not "Laud's", but the work of Scottish bishops) was that it provided any set forms of prayer at all.

† So great a man was not to kneel before Parliament till Warren Hastings did so in 1788.

courage and Christianity of his death". Laud, with similar leanings towards authority, failed to realise either the profound anti-clericalism of the English people or their dislike to over-regulation. He had a good cause, vindicated by the serene and temperate wisdom of the judicious Hooker and illustrated by saintly lives like that of his own master Lancelot Andrewes, but he discredited it by the methods he employed in its support. No academic personage (except President Wilson) has played so large a part in history: he carried the donnish temperament into all his public life, and his prodigious activity, always aimed at good objects, sometimes degenerated into fussiness. The Court of High Commission under his direction set itself to reform morality, and did not hesitate to punish "persons of honour and great quality": it dealt with blasphemy and sacrilege by methods no more severe than those of the ordinary law courts of the day: so far the Puritans sympathised with him, but his attempts to secure a decency in worship alienated them as much as his other efforts annoyed the rich and profligate: he was "the little meddling hocus-pocus": he faced, in Clarendon's words, "a thwarteous world with no other friendship or support than what the splendour of a pious life and his unpolished integrity could reconcile to him". This was not enough support for a man whose judgment and temper were alike imperfect: "he did court persons too little".

But the cause was greater than the man: "He had at heart", says Bishop Creighton, "the ideal of a united England with a Church at once Catholic, scriptural, apostolic, free from superstition, yet retaining all that was primitive, a meeting place for all men of enlightenment, a model of piety and devotion to a distracted world—the system of the Church was to be definite, but it was to be large, sympathetic and liberal". If, as he goes on to say, "he did not draw the line between what was of primary importance and what was trivial", if he was sometimes "hurried, fretful and peevish", these are not faults which are commonly expiated on the scaffold.\* (*Historical Lectures.*)

The religious troubles which Laud's methods provoked were not the only ones which Charles had to face: the others were financial and legal. Parliament was rightly jealous of the royal power of

\* Though it cannot be fairly claimed for Laud's work that "from it sprang the New England States" (Fisher, II, 651), for the *Mayflower* had sailed in 1620, long before he became Archbishop, his religious methods certainly stimulated the emigration of those who disagreed with them, as they had stimulated Presbyterianism in Scotland.

taxation, and the Petition of Right (1628) which declared loans and taxes without consent of Parliament to be illegal, was the joint work of politicians and lawyers. The former were growing more independent than they had been in Elizabethan days and needed more tactful handling than they received: the latter stood for the Common Law of England as against the Roman Law which exalted the power of the Crown (we have seen its influence in France). It was for his part in this struggle that Sir John Eliot, the noblest representative of his cause, was sent to die in the Tower. The verdict in the ship-money case showed the danger of a judiciary subservient to the Crown.

We have dealt at length with these two advisers because they represent the two issues at stake in the Civil War. On two points Charles was determined never to yield: he meant to be a king like his predecessors, in the sense, at the very least, of retaining an absolute veto on what was done, and he meant to maintain the episcopal constitution of the Church of England.

This whole-hearted resolution had the double advantage of enabling him (secure in his own conscience) to offer concessions which he never meant to grant, and so to deceive opponents (and friends) who did not know that on both points he was inflexible. A very conscientious deceiver is in a strong position. Whatever he might at times suggest, the only Parliament which he would accept would have been one after the French model, composed

of such who can obey

As they were gathered to consult, not sway.

He could have been a "constitutional King", but a limited monarchy suited neither his conscience nor his political creed.

Again, whatever he might say to the Scots, he had no intention whatever of allowing Presbyterianism to be firmly established in England: and his overtures to the Irish Catholics, or to the Independents, were always in the nature of expedients, and never based on any general theory of toleration, of which he knew as little as his opponents—and indeed much less than some of them.

His external assets were that, little as the country liked a despotic king, it disliked equally the despotism of Parliament, and even more the later despotism of the army; while in religious affairs it soon found that "new Presbyter was but old priest writ large", and indeed much "larger" than before.

His fundamental weakness lay in the fact that, being only partly English, he never understood the English people: a king

who relied impartially on Scotch, Irish, French, or Dutch support gradually forfeited his claim on English allegiance, though the prestige of his name was powerful to the end, and still greater after his death.

It is easy for us to see that the real point at issue was whether "sovereign authority" did or did not ultimately rest with the king. The great Tudors had never claimed to override the law, nor to act without consent of Parliament, but the Stuarts were disposed to assert that theory of the divine right of temporal rulers against which the mediaeval Popes had strenuously contended. The ordinary Englishman, though prepared to agree that "Kings were the images and representatives of God's visible authority on earth", was by no means prepared to see the doctrine applied in detail to the constitution of his country, and there were some, like Pym, who went so far in the other direction as already to champion the claim of Parliament to be the ultimate authority. Pym lived some centuries too soon, and the constitutional monarchy which, largely through Clarendon's influence, was established at the Restoration was long to preserve to the Crown a very personal share in government.

In 1641 this was already the ideal of what may be called the "constitutional Cavaliers": they had not approved of the thorough-going policy of Strafford, but were far from ready to admit the supremacy of Parliament (foreshadowed in the Grand Remonstrance in November of that year) and still less that of the House of Commons alone. The Royalists as a whole wished to uphold the Church and "the good old frame of government", with no very clear idea what that frame was, for abstract questions have never greatly interested the English mind; they were rightly alarmed and shocked at "innovations", such as those which led to the death of Strafford, or, in later days, of Laud; \* and if the Royalist party contained many who were far from supporting an arbitrary government, so there were many among their opponents who cared very little about questions of "ultimate sovereignty", and whose motives were more concrete and personal. They disliked the idea that their political rights were being trifled with: they had a strong, if unreasoned, dislike of "Romanism": the virtuous distrusted the morals of the Court, and, whether

\* The twins of public rage, adjudged to die  
For treasons they should act by prophecy:  
The facts were done, before the laws were made;  
The trump turned up after the game was played. (Clarendon.)

virtuous or vicious, they disliked being interfered with by royal or episcopal decrees. For the rest, the provincial divisions of England, and the particular preferences of great local families had much to do with the alignment of parties: as always in English history, it is a mistake "to exaggerate the clash of ideas and interests between contending parties": the Royalism, for instance, of Kent differed greatly from that of Cornwall, and the Presbyterianism of Eastern England from the Whiggism of the Middle West (see Feiling, *History of the Tory Party*, chaps. I-III). On both sides, no doubt, there were many who "knew what they fought for, and loved what they knew", but, as in all wars, there were many more of whom it would be truer to say that they knew and hated what they were fighting against.

Of the war itself we have no space to speak, but it may be noted that what turned the scale against the king, besides that New Model Army which Cromwell's russet-coated captains led, was the lack of money, and the loyalty of London to the Parliamentary cause. It should be noted also that it was in no sense a war of class against class: if eighty peers fought for the king, thirty fought against him, and nearly 200 members of the House of Commons were on his side: it was a struggle for political and religious ideals, imperfectly understood, no doubt, but all the more ardently embraced, which divided the people of England. We may observe that while the Parliament always had its reserves in Scotland, the Royalists had theirs in the Catholic people of Ireland: it is no accident that "Whig" is a Scottish and "Tory" an Irish name.

We may think that we know quite clearly which side we should ourselves have taken, but whichever it may be, we shall have to confess that our idol has feet of clay. Charles may have died to save the Church (and, in truth, he served it well upon the scaffold), but he had used very questionable means to save it and the monarchy while he lived: no generous man would have refused to let Sir John Eliot be buried among his own people: no brave man would have signed Strafford's death warrant: no perfectly honest man would have agreed (as he did in 1647) to establish Presbyterianism for three years in England as the price of restoration to his throne. He did nothing "common or mean" at his death, but, in his genuine belief that the causes of royalty and religion were identical, he had done many such things before he died.

And Parliament, rightly anxious to save England from an arbitrary government and to defend the rights of conscience and of citizenship, was reckless of both where religion was concerned; it handed English liberties over to the Scots and bade the people exchange the whips of Laud for the scorpions of Presbyterianism. No single act in all its history is more discreditable than the mean and cruel vengeance taken on the Archbishop—"not only", as he said upon the scaffold, "the first Archbishop, but the first man, that hath ever died by an ordinance in Parliament". The Long Parliament did England very great service, but its denial of religious liberty, its vindictive treatment of "malignants", its encouragement of war profiteers, and the meanness of its refusal to pay the army which had saved it, must always qualify our admiration.

### *Spain 1598-1650*

Spain under Philip III (1598-1621) went steadily downhill: she was forced in 1609 to recognise the practical independence of the Dutch, and an attempt to propitiate Providence by expelling the Moriscoes, who were suspected of heresy, lost her half a million of her most industrious subjects—a criminal folly obliquely but not obscurely denounced by Cervantes in *Don Quixote*. Philip IV (1621-65) was even more unfortunate. His minister, Olivarez, aimed to be the Richelieu of Spain, and to do for Philip what the Cardinal was doing for Louis XIII. The canvases of Velasquez, revealing, as they do, the self-complacency of the minister and the dull arrogance of his master, suggest the absurdity of the attempt. Olivarez had forgotten (what Napoleon was to learn to his cost) that the peninsula is not a unity, and that Madrid, unlike Paris or London, is an artificial capital. The result was a rising in Catalonia, always jealous of its separate rights, a war with France ending in the defeat of Rocroi (1643), and the Peace of the Pyrenees (1659) with the cession of territory on the border and in Flanders: Portugal also resented the attempt to treat it as a mere province, and denounced its union with Spain, which after twenty-eight years of war (1640-68) had to recognise the new House of Braganza. The peninsula was less united than ever. Nor were Philip's misfortunes limited to the first half of the century.

He was still king when the Peace of the Pyrenees brought to an end the century in which Spain had ranked among the great



powers. It is the world's loss that the genius of Velasquez was mainly devoted to subjects so little worthy of immortality as Philip IV, his family, his ministers, his jesters and his dwarfs.

### *North-Eastern Europe 1600-50*

We have seen both Denmark and Sweden playing a part in the Thirty Years War, and it is time to explain their position. Denmark, Norway and Sweden were united in 1397 under a Danish queen, but the Swedes were not long content, and when an unwise Danish king in 1521 lost his throne, while the Danes elected a Duke of Holstein, they chose a king from the able but erratic House of Vasa, Gustavus. He introduced the Reformation, and, like Henry VIII, enriched both the Crown and the nobles at the expense of the Church, but one of the sons who succeeded him showed leanings to the old faith, and his grandson Sigismund (who had been elected King of Poland before becoming King of Sweden in 1592) was an ardent Catholic. The Swedes who, like the English, had come to regard Catholicism as a foreign faith, refused to accept him and chose instead his uncle Charles.

He ruled wisely and well, but when Gustavus Adolphus, his son, came to the throne in 1611, he had several dangers to face. There was the menace of Denmark which still held the south of the Swedish peninsula and blocked the way to the ocean, the hostility of Poland, whose king still claimed the Swedish throne, and the growing menace of Russia, which was beginning to take an interest in the Baltic and disliked (as she still does) to see Esthonia and Livonia in other hands than her own.

Denmark was the first of these enemies to attack him, and a successful campaign against her was followed by an equally successful invasion of Russia, both of which improved Sweden's position: his cousin of Poland now attacked in turn, and four campaigns, if they achieved little else, made Gustavus an experienced general and his army a formidable force. The Baltic schemes of Ferdinand and Wallenstein (see p. 233) naturally alarmed him and reinforced his very real zeal for the Protestant cause: he made up his old quarrels with the Danes and landed in Pomerania in 1630.

We need not repeat the story of his victories, nor describe again the advantages which Sweden gained from the Treaty of Westphalia, thanks to the skill with which after his death his great minister Oxenstiern negotiated with Richelieu, and to the skill and valour of his troops. His daughter Christina was only four

years old at her father's death, but the ten years of her personal rule (1644-54) saw Sweden at the height of its power, supreme in the Baltic, with considerable gains on land, and with her access to the ocean assured.

In the light of later events the rise of the Brandenburg-Prussian House of Hohenzollern is one of the most important facts of this half-century (see genealogical table, p. 381). At its beginning one branch held the Electorate of Brandenburg and another the Duchy of East Prussia as a fief of Poland (this was a legacy from the Teutonic Knights, of whom a Hohenzollern had been the last Grand Master). In 1618 this second branch failed in the male line, and the Duchy passed to the Elector.

It was a disastrous day for Europe, for it raised the apparently insoluble problem of combining physical union between Brandenburg and East Prussia with access to the sea for Poland, whose unchallenged possession of West Prussia, in which Danzig lies, separated them decisively.

In the Thirty Years War Brandenburg suffered severely through being a Swedish battlefield, though the Elector was rather half-heartedly in alliance with Gustavus. He was succeeded in 1640 by Frederic William "The Great Elector", "a most rapid, clear-eyed, active man" as Carlyle calls him. His clear eye told him that his country needed access to the Baltic, and by the Treaty of Westphalia, as we have seen, he acquired the eastern half of Pomerania, and was free to meditate his plans, and to nurse his grievances against Poland, his suzerain in East Prussia. On the south shore of the Baltic we can begin to discern the shape of things to come.

### *Poland and Russia to 1676*

Poland, the largest state in Central Europe, was one of the countries where the Jesuits had had most success: its fervent Catholicism alienated the country from Bohemia and Brandenburg on the west, from Russia on the east, and from Sweden on the North, and its constitution was by no means calculated to strengthen its powers of resistance. The Diet, elected only by the nobles, chose a king, made the laws and even took a part in their administration. When it is added that in 1632 it was arranged that any single member, by what is called the *Liberum Veto*, could annul its proceedings, we see that it was the pre-destined prey of ill-disposed and greedy neighbours.

In Russia the Moscow princes of the House of Rurik had succeeded in the fifteenth century in shaking off the Tartar yoke, and by 1533 could claim to be autocrats of all Russia: Ivan the Terrible, a savage autocrat (1533-84), the first to take the title of Tsar, began to deal as an equal with other nations, but the Russians, with their drunkenness, their wife-beating, their legalised serfdom and their general lack of the civilised virtues, were generally regarded by Western Europe as little better than the Turks: the dynasty came to an end with his son, and the Romanoffs obtained the throne in 1612, after a period of anarchy in the course of which the Poles captured Moscow and tried to conquer the country. The choice of a Romanoff, of a family connected with that of Rurik, was largely due to hatred of the Poles who were detested as heretics, and also as lords of Lithuania, inhabited by orthodox Russians.

The first Romanoff re-established order and his son Alexis (1645-76) was able to go further, both by getting his autocracy legally recognised and by assuming in 1648 the protectorate of the Cossacks, who were Polish subjects. Poland's Orthodox, as well as her Protestant, neighbour had no lack of grievance, and her Catholicism was to find her no trustworthy ally: indeed, Austria and France were both hoping to profit from her disorganisation.

## The Seventeenth Century : Second Half

A short summary will show how crowded is this half-century, with great events. Louis XIV fights at least three wars, though he has still another to fight: England sees the Protectorate, the Restoration and the Revolution, two wars with the Dutch and one with the French: William III in 1700 has still two years to live. The Turks make their last serious inroad upon Europe.

It may be assumed that these events are familiar to all readers of history, but our sense of proportion is influenced by our own concerns. For a hundred intelligent persons who have heard vaguely of the Peace of Ryswick, hardly one has heard of those of Oliva or Carlowitz: everyone knows of French interests on the Rhine, but few remember Austrian interests on the Danube: we have heard of the battle of the Boyne, and possibly of Neerwinden and Steinkirk, but not of the infinitely more important battles of St. Gothard on the Raab or Fehrbellin: the name of Sobieski is faintly familiar, but that of Kiuprili strikes no chord in our hearts.

And yet it was in the East of Europe rather than in the West that history was being made: there the last, and very dangerous, invasions of the Turks were beaten back: there the two great powers of Prussia and Russia were beginning to show themselves: there the long-drawn tragedy of Poland was beginning to be played. The struggle in the West, though full of incident and human interest, was of no fundamental concern: France was already strong and in the period became appreciably stronger, but there was no new development in her policy: it was directed, as French policy has always been, solely to the benefit of France, and later history will show that, for all the temporary glamour which dazzled Europe, that benefit was sought on lines which, though obvious, were mistaken. There is little of lasting interest to be learnt from the reign of Louis XIV: *le Roi Soleil* was a false sun.

In England, it is true, developments of the greatest importance were taking place, and the English constitution was beginning to take shape, partly by accident and partly through the national ability to design and work a tolerant compromise between opposing theories in Church and State: but to do justice to this would

be impossible in the space at our disposal. For these reasons we shall pass with what must seem discreditable haste over our own affairs and those of France, and give more attention to those foreign events which were vitally to affect us till the present day. The point at which we pause is not as arbitrary as it might seem, for in 1700 Charles II of Spain died and his namesake, Charles XII of Sweden, began his active career, while the Elector of Brandenburg crowned himself King of Prussia in 1701—all of them events which were greatly to concern the eighteenth century.

### *Sweden*

In 1654 Christina of Sweden abdicated—one of the most remarkable women who ever wore a European crown: she possessed, in addition to feminine charm, all those qualities which we are accustomed to regard as peculiarly masculine, common sense, bodily endurance, roughness of speech and sensibility, hatred of humbug and strength of decision. She dressed like a man, tired her courtiers in the hunting field, and longed to see a battle. She was a capricious genius, cynical and warm-hearted, generous and cruel by turns; but she loved her country, and her abdication, when she decided to join the Roman Catholic Church, was a patriotic act.

Her successor, Charles X, was a soldier, and welcomed the opportunity of war with those ancient enemies of his country, Poland and Denmark: in both wars he was successful and the battle of Warsaw laid Poland at his mercy (1656): but Frederic William, the Great Elector, who had been his unwilling ally, suddenly changed sides in the middle of the war, incited the Danes and Russians to attack him, so that the chief result of the Treaty of Oliva (1660) was not to secure Poland for the Swedes but to give Frederic William the full sovereignty of East Prussia—another landmark in Prussian history. It should be added that the growing power of Sweden was beginning to excite the jealousy of England and Holland, who used their influence to get the treaty signed: they would have been wiser to suspect the ambitions of the Great Elector.

Fifteen years later Frederic William defeated a Swedish army which (under instructions from Louis XIV, their ally and paymaster) had invaded Brandenburg, and the battle of Fehrbellin (1675) has been described as the first step to Sadowa and Sedan. It destroyed the prestige of the Swedish army and was followed

by the loss of Swedish or Western Pomerania, but, thanks to Louis, this was restored at the peace.

Charles XI, who had succeeded in 1660, took the opportunity of the lowered credit of his government to assert the royal power at home, in imitation of his patron, Louis, and for the rest of the century peace settled on the shores of the Baltic, the Swedes holding Finland and the ports of Reval and Riga, and also the little island in the Neva on which St. Petersburg was one day to rise: it was to be rudely disturbed again in 1700 by a war which was to end in her definite reduction to the rank of a second-class power: it was dangerous to hold lands which both Prussia and Russia coveted.

Charles XII succeeded in 1697 at the age of fifteen, and the moment seemed opportune to Denmark, Poland and Russia to retaliate on Sweden: they allied against her in 1699. As the next century was to show, they had made a very serious miscalculation.

### *Russia*

Of Russia there is as yet little definite to be said, but change was in the air. Alexis, the second of the Romanoffs (1645-76), began plans for civilising his people and training his army on European lines—a process to be notably continued under his son Peter. But by the end of the century Peter was still finding his feet: he was the son of a second marriage, and two brothers, a mother, and a masterful sister, stood successively between him and the throne: in 1694, at the age of twenty-two, he at last became sole Tsar. By 1700 he had captured Azoff from the Turks and severely repressed a mutiny of his guard. His great days were soon to come.\*

### *The Turks*

Before dealing with Poland, it will be well to consider the menace of the Turks, in meeting which Poles played so notable a part. Till 1656 the Turks had been feeble and inactive for half a century—a very fortunate circumstance for Europe, which would have been particularly vulnerable during the Thirty Years War. In that year an old Albanian, Mohammed Kiuprili, became Grand Vizier, and founded a dynasty of ministers which made Turkey formidable once more. He restored their navy, fortified the Dardanelles (lately threatened by Venice), attacked Crete,

\* As we have had so little occasion to speak of Scotland, it may be noted that Peter was of Scottish ancestry on his mother's side.

which held out for twenty years, and recovered some Aegean islands from the Venetians. His son and successor was the real ruler of Turkey from 1661-76.

In 1663 he attacked Hungary with a vast army, offered the emperor insulting terms, including a yearly tribute, and came very near to Vienna. Europe for once co-operated for its own salvation: troops came from France \* and Sweden to help the emperor, money from Italy and Spain. A great battle was fought at St. Gothard in Styria: the imperial general gave his troops "death or victory" as the watchword, and victory was won. It was a success far more decisive than Lepanto, being really the beginning of a series of successes: but, just as Lepanto failed to save Cyprus, so St. Gothard failed to save Crete, which surrendered in 1669.

But Turkish aggression was by no means over, and Kiuprili turned in another direction. The Turks, like the Poles and the Russians, claimed dominion over the Cossacks of the Ukraine—a word meaning "boundary", for it was a district which had once been the boundary between Russia, Poland, Turkey and Little Tartary: a series of wars followed (1672-76) in which, in spite of the prowess of John Sobieski, the Poles lost ground: the final treaty gave the Turks a large province, the last European ground they were ever to gain, and far less than Kiuprili had aspired to secure.

He, the second of his name, died in 1676, but five years later the new Grand Vizier planned a new attack on Austria, in alliance with an insurrection in Hungary, and with the connivance of Louis XIV, now again intriguing with the infidel. In 1683 the march on Vienna began, and the emperor fled from the city. The garrison of 14,000, besieged by ten times their number and reduced by famine and pestilence, were at the last extremity. It was a moment of real peril for Europe, of infinitely more importance than the age-long bickering along the French frontier, where one war often reversed the result of the last: if the Turks had taken Vienna, it is impossible to say how far their impetus might have carried them, or how much of Central Europe might have suffered the fate which has so long held back the Balkan races from their true development.

But it was not to be. On September 12th, 1683, John Sobieski, the great Pole, joined by an imperial army, attacked the Turks with

\* Louis XIV had temporarily quarrelled with his old Turkish ally.

less than half their number, and completely routed them. A service was held in the Stephanskirche in Vienna, and the preacher, with pardonable profanity, took as his text the words, "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John".

And this was far from being the end of Turkish disasters. Sobieski harried them in Hungary, and on his retirement the imperial general won it all back by 1686, subduing the Hungarian rebels as well as their allies, and closing his campaign with a great victory on the historic field of Mohacz. Belgrade was taken two years later. Meanwhile the Venetians were also active, conquering the Morea (or Peloponnese) and taking Corinth and Athens--where a Venetian bomb did lamentable damage to the Parthenon. Another Kiuprili did something to restore the Turkish fortunes, but, by the peace of Carlowitz (1699) they surrendered to the emperor the whole of Hungary, most of Croatia and Slavonia, and the suzerainty of Transylvania, while Venice retained the Morea. The Turkish menace was now at an end.\*

### *Poland*

We now turn to Poland, that very large country with a very brave but very ill-disciplined army, with a Diet neither disciplined nor courageous, and a king chosen by election in order to avoid the risk of a strong central government: we have seen the many enemies surrounding her, and how she suffered in her war with Sweden, and was compelled to buy the temporary support of Frederic William of Brandenburg by allowing him the full sovereignty of East Prussia: we have seen also the gallant and unselfish part which she played in coming to the help of Austria. The Jagellon House (see p. 159) had ended in 1572: and, after a French and a native king, Sigismund Vasa of Sweden was chosen and reigned from 1587-1631: this, as we have seen, led to troubles with Sweden (see p. 251).

In this period Poland's chief troubles arose with her subjects the Cossacks,† who resented her oppressive rule and offered their allegiance to the Tsar. Sobieski subdued them in 1667 and again in 1670, but two years later they turned for help to the Turks. The futile king consented to surrender the disputed territory and pay

\* There was to be a brief revival in the next century, when the Venetians lost the Peloponnese (1715), but an attempt on Hungary was thwarted by Prince Eugene, and Austria retained both it and Belgrade.

† The Cossacks were not a tribe or a race, but a kind of military colonist, like the frontiersmen of North America, half-soldier and half-cowboy.



tribute, but Sobieski again rose to the occasion, and for four years held the enemy at bay: he was rightly rewarded by being elected king in 1674: on his death, in 1697, Augustus the Strong of Saxony was elected, and a new chapter in Polish history begins—a tale of unrelieved disaster.

It might have been supposed that Poland, a Catholic country threatened by the infidel, the Protestant and the Orthodox, would have received the support of Catholic powers such as France and Austria, but Austria was to act on the principle avowed by one of its later foreign ministers and “to astonish the world with her ingratitude”, and to Louis Poland was simply a pawn on the political chessboard.

Henceforth Poland's destiny will be to suffer and not to do, but her services to Europe should not be forgotten: still less should the great figure of John Sobieski, that gallant, corpulent and indomitable general, who held that the only “noble, wise and decisive” policy was to “give the barbarian conquest for conquest”, and to “raise upon his ruins the Empire of Byzantium”. In a selfish century he at least was inspired by an idea. He has been described by the historian of the seventeenth century as “one of the very few men in history who have waged, with success and humanity, a completely justifiable war”.

### *Brandenburg—Prussia*

We have already described how the Great Elector (1640-88) secured the full possession of East Prussia (p. 255). That was his only territorial success: in Louis's various wars he fought once for the French and twice against them: but he began to centralise and modernise his government, and prepared the way for his successors in the next century to realise his ambitious programme.

### *France*

Louis XIV, declaring *L'état c'est moi*, recalls the cry of Boniface VIII, “I am Emperor, I am Pope”. Both pushed to its extreme and logical conclusion a doctrine which in its milder form had borne much useful fruit, and both thereby ensured the ruin of their cause. The parallel often passes unnoticed because, while in the one case Nemesis was immediate, in the other it was long delayed: “with Boniface VIII fell the mediæval Papacy”, but it was nearly a century before a world, long hypnotised by the splendours of Versailles, saw that, so far from France being

identical with the monarchy, its character was more truly expressed by a republic.

But it was Louis XIV who made the Revolution inevitable: to concentrate everything in the single hand of the king is to risk all on a steady succession of able monarchs such as no dynasty has long supplied. The more Louis exalted himself, the more impossible he made the task of those who were to follow him. He had behind him no sound conception of national policy: he gave the French people glory, but it was the glory of military triumph, and, if the national taste was thereby lowered, it is he who is responsible for its debasement. He contributed no single constructive idea to the life either of France or of the world: he chose no wise ministers, for those who served him so well were all legacies from Mazarin: the result of prodigious efforts and a vast expenditure of blood and treasure was to leave his country somewhat larger indeed than he found it, *and with frontiers more secure, but poorer in its manhood*, by the loss of the industrious Huguenots, with an impoverished peasantry, and without a friend in Europe.

In our present period his long course is not fully run: he has still a war to fight and lose, but in these fifty years his essential qualities are fully displayed—his utter lack of political or moral scruple, his religious intolerance, his mania for glory, and his essential vulgarity of soul. His fame is not surprising: he was "of the world", and we have the best authority for knowing that "the world loves its own".

Mazarin, who left his family a large private fortune, bequeathed, as we have said, to the king the invaluable legacy of some first-rate administrators: of these the greatest was Colbert.

Colbert was a genius with great and obvious limitations: he restored French finances and enormously increased the national wealth, encouraging trade and manufactures with such success that French lace, glass, tapestries and silks became world-famous: roads, rivers and canals were harnessed to the service of industry: the navy was strengthened: colonisation was encouraged in the interests of commerce. When he died, in 1683, France was a very rich country. It is sad to think that his coffin (like that of Castlereagh) was followed to the grave by the curses of the people he had served so well.

He won hatred partly for his virtues but mainly for faults not his own: he was not to blame that the taxation which he so sternly and efficiently enacted, and the wealth which he had done so

much to create went to support wholly unnecessary wars. In fact, thanks to him, France was in a position to dominate Europe by peaceful means: it was the second of her great opportunities: she missed the first in 1494 when, instead of turning towards Flanders and the North-East, she plunged into ruinous adventures in Italy: she missed the second when Louis decided that military glory was a necessity for a truly Grand Monarque.

Colbert's system had faults of its own: taxation fell most heavily on the poorer classes: the colonies which he encouraged were over-regulated: and the protective system by which he wisely built up the infant French industry was carried to an extreme, on the faulty theory that the prosperity of any one country is best served by the ruin of its neighbours. This inevitably provoked the jealousy of other nations, and might no doubt in time have led to commercial wars: but it was simply suicidal to give neighbours already irritated the further grievance of unprovoked aggression. It was a folly which Louis did not hesitate to commit.

In 1667 he seized Franche Comté and much of the Spanish Netherlands on a preposterous legal pretext, thereby provoking the Dutch, English and Swedes to form a Triple Alliance which forced him to restore Franche Comté, though he retained many towns in Flanders—"Flanders being a perpetual Object in their Eye, a lasting Beauty for which the French have an incurable passion". (Halifax, *The Character of a Trimmer*.)

His second war, in 1672, was one of sheer revenge against the Dutch, and the English and Swedes were bribed to change sides: "for his Most Christian Majesty, after his Conquering Meals, ever riseth with a stomach, and he liked the Pattern so well that it gave him a longing desire to have the whole Piece" (*ibid.*). Amsterdam was saved by the cutting of the dykes, and by the end of the year the emperor and the Great Elector had agreed to support Holland: two years later England had deserted him, and Louis stood alone against almost all Europe except Sweden. The French armies fought splendidly, but in spite of the genius of Condé and Turenne, and though the Peace of Nymwegen (1678) gave him Franche Comté and strengthened his hold on Lorraine, he had failed completely in his attempt to humiliate and destroy "messieurs les marchands".

The seven years' interval before his third war was largely occupied with attempts by legal aggression to overthrow the last

settlement—attempts which won him Strasburg, but angered Germany; with a quarrel with his old ally Sweden; with a personal attack on William of Holland, by annexing Orange; with disputes with the Pope, which alienated Catholic sympathy; with the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, which alarmed the Protestants; with intrigues with the Turks which shocked both alike; and with improvements to his army and navy which alarmed all Europe. He seemed to go out of his way to ensure that when he made his next bid for supremacy he should have no friend in the world.

Louis's policy, it has been well said, "taught Europe the art of progressive coalition": the Triple Alliance was followed by the League of Augsburg, and that in 1689 by the Grand Alliance which united all Europe against him. Ten years of uninteresting warfare, more creditable to the French than to the coalition, ended with the Peace of Ryswick (1697), by which he was forced to restore all the towns he had acquired since the Peace of Nymwegen (except Strasburg), to allow the Dutch to garrison their frontier fortresses, and—bitterest of all—to acknowledge William III as King of England (see p. 275).

His Revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685), whether its object was to propitiate the Gallican Church, now a strong influence, or to please Madame de Maintenon (whom he had secretly married), was an act of arrogant and intolerant folly which robbed France of a quarter of a million industrious subjects, loyal and helpless victims, and proportionately enriching the Protestant countries of Holland, Brandenburg and England. The "Dragonnades" (quartering dragoons in Protestant houses) had been employed as a method of conversion: the Revocation destroyed Protestant churches, banished Protestant pastors, and condemned to the galleys Huguenots who tried to escape.

It is true that Louis gave his royal patronage to science and art, but in public affairs, after the death of Colbert (whom he never liked), he either leant on men like Louvois, who was an expert only in military affairs, or trusted to his own inspiration: his tyranny was inefficient, especially on the fiscal side. In the last twenty-four years of his reign this "inspiration" led him to commit one blunder after another. Like Napoleon, he neglected his navy, and with equally disastrous results.

The literature of his age is its most permanent memorial. The genius of Molière is indisputable, though his claim to be a great

poet is more doubtful: Corneille and Racine are great and noble names, but though they say what they have to say "with unequalled point and precision", they seem to English taste to be lacking in that sense of infinity which marks the greatest poetry, which "deals with time as if it touched eternity". (J. Bailey, *The Claims of French Poetry*, pp. 23 ff.) However that may be, it is difficult to believe that their inspiration came from the Court. Still less can that be said of the great Pascal, whose fine irony was displayed in his *Lettres Provinciales* in defence of Jansenism against the Jesuits, but failed to save it from royal condemnation in 1665.\*

For these reasons, while admitting the splendours of Versailles and the influence which its example had on all European courts, we cannot but regard Louis's reign as a failure. He had had the peaceful domination of Europe within his grasp, but, like the dog in the fable, had dropped it to pursue a shadow. In the words of a distinguished French writer, who cannot be accused of anti-Gallic prejudice, "Il a su se faire obéir; il n'a pas su gouverner": his desire to ruin the Hapsburgs, once almost a necessity, became "un mot d'ordre machinalement transmis". (Lavissee, *op. cit.*, pp. 144 ff.)

### *Holland 1650-1700*

Before turning to English affairs, it will be well to consider the political situation in Holland, and so to explain the sudden variations in our dealings with the Dutch. It was dominated by the struggle between the Republican party and the House of Orange, which had gained greatly in prestige by its leadership against Philip II. As war receded, the Republicans began to assert themselves, but Maurice of Nassau, William's son, established his authority as Stadtholder by very dubious methods, and for forty years his House was supreme. In 1650 a second William of Orange, who had married Charles I's daughter, attempted to establish a monarchy by a *coup d'état*, but died in the moment of crisis: he left—or rather he did not leave, for the child was born after his death—a son who was vitally to affect our history, William III of Holland and, in due course, of England. For the moment the

\* The Jansenists, whose champion Pascal was, maintained an extreme doctrine of predestination, and upheld a rigorous moral code: the Jesuits, their opponents, preached freedom of the will and were ready to make allowances for human frailty—allowances which might easily pass into the "casuistry" which Pascal so bitterly denounced. Another point of contention was that the Jansenists maintained the "Gallican" claim that the French Church must be consulted before Papal Bulls were published in France, a doctrine naturally abhorrent to the Jesuits.

result was a triumph for the Republicans, who decided to leave the office of Stadtholder vacant, and in 1651 power passed to a "Grand Pensionary", John de Witt—three months after Cromwell had become Protector.

The two new governors inherited a war between their respective countries. This is a strange fact, for in 1651 England had sent envoys to Holland to suggest a union between the two Republics (it is curious to remember how the Dutch had once asked Elizabeth to be their queen). But Stuart and Royalist sentiment was still strong in Holland: and in the same year England passed the Navigation Act designed to damage the Dutch carrying trade: this had grown largely through the fact that West Indian colonies, loyal to the king, preferred to deal with a friendly foreign power rather than with a rebel England. In this war Blake ultimately triumphed over Van Tromp, and de Witt made peace with Cromwell, who shared his antipathy to the House of Orange with its Stuart connection, and insisted that they should be permanently excluded from the Stadtholderate—a provision repealed in 1660 after the Restoration.

That event did not make for friendliness with the Dutch Republic, whose trade continued to grow at our expense: in 1664 a piratical expedition of ours seized New Amsterdam, now to become New York, and in 1665 war followed. The Duke of York won a great victory at Lowestoft, but Monk and Rupert were not so successful, and, just as the war was ending, Dutch ships sailed up the Medway, captured the Royal Charles and threatened London. The Treaty of Breda ended the war (1667), relaxing the Act of Navigation but leaving us New York, and made possible the Triple Alliance against France in the following year (see p. 261).

De Witt still continued, in spite of popular sentiment, to try to keep the House of Orange in the background, but when war with France began in 1672 the young William was declared Captain-General, and next year de Witt, not without his connivance, was brutally murdered by his ungrateful people. In this war England took a brief and discreditable part on the French side.

The war, which we need not again describe, left William with an enduring hatred of the French, and when the chance came for him to win the Crown of England he valued it mainly as a potent instrument in his war with Louis—an attitude which the English naturally failed to appreciate, till Louis went out of his way to give them a grievance of their own.

*England 1649-1700*

The king's death, with which we ended our last period, by no means ended the fighting. His son automatically became King of Scotland and was referred to as such by Parliament: Scotland and Ireland had to be conquered, and Cromwell's victories established the single Commonwealth at which Charles had aimed by very different methods: it is one of the great achievements of the New Model Army, and Scottish and Irish members sat in the Parliaments of the Protectorate. The achievement is marred by the unforgotten cruelty of the Irish settlement, which in its result destroyed the native gentry and left the priests as leaders of a rightly resentful people.

Into the details of Cromwell's five years' administration as Protector (1653-58) we cannot go: its pathos is that, though he was himself a firm believer in Parliamentary rule, he could find no Parliament with which he could work. This involved the establishment, against his own inclination, of the rule of Major-Generals—a step which has much to do with the irrational prejudice of the English against the army.

It is sad to think that the two Services, which in Cromwell's days were equally glorious, have had so different a fate.\* At the Restoration, Blake and the Navy were honoured and maintained to our great and lasting benefit, while the New Model Army, which had done so much (and incidentally had abolished corruption in its own administration), was almost completely disbanded. One regiment alone, Monk's Coldstreamers, was preserved at the last moment (and then only because an insurrection threatened the king's safety), to become the foundation stone for the future army.

Turenne thought highly of the British soldiers, and in their new red cassocks ("of Venice-red colour shrunk in water") they justified his good opinion at the Battle of the Dunes (see p. 267).† It is interesting to remember that the King's Regiment of Guards, fighting under James Duke of York on the losing Spanish side, was the last to surrender, and survived to become in due course the First or Grenadier Guards.

\* In those days the distinction between them was by no means definite: Blake was a soldier till he was fifty, and Rupert, Monk and the Duke of York were all distinguished both on land and sea.

† Though the army thus early asserted its claim to the colour red, the navy did not receive its blue uniform till 1748, when George II, seeing the Duchess of Bedford (wife of the First Lord of the Admiralty) riding in a blue habit with white facings in the Park, decided that those should be the colours of the navy. (*Chronicles of the Eighteenth Century* (Wyndham), II, 48.)

In religious matters Cromwell, as became an "Independent", was by nature and inclination tolerant: it was the intolerance of Spain which he could not forgive: he had urged Parliament, when he was a private member in 1647, to give the Prayer Book official toleration, but as Protector, unfortunately for his own fame, he could not do so openly, and the Church of England, whose cause was identified with the Stuarts, continued to suffer grievously; but he was no persecutor and neither Roman Catholics nor Quakers were violently dealt with.

In a history of Europe his foreign policy concerns us more, and we have Clarendon's word for it that "his greatness at home was a mere shadow of his greatness abroad". In order to appreciate Oliver's foreign policy we must go back for a century. Elizabeth's aim had been to avoid war until it was forced upon her, and the Stuarts, on the whole, followed in her steps, for their feeble and inconsistent military enterprises were purely spasmodic: the Parliament had inherited their inconsistency, as is shown by their offering union to the Dutch and in the same year provoking them to war.

Cromwell's policy was national, not dynastic, and warlike, not peaceful. It is true that he began by making peace with Holland, but in those days he clearly toyed with the idea of setting himself at the head of a great Protestant League—the very position which Elizabeth had so steadily declined. He had high hopes of Sweden as an ally, until Charles X disappointed him by turning his arms against Protestant Denmark (see p. 255). The enemy at which Cromwell aimed was not Catholicism as such, but intolerant Catholicism, and that is why he ultimately chose to make war on Spain and not on France. The choice is at first sight surprising, for it was France which had a close connection with the Stuarts and had refused to recognise the Commonwealth till some years after Spain had done so. But France had her Edict of Nantes, while Spain had her Inquisition. Both countries were anxious for alliance with England, now strong both by sea and land, but Cromwell's own mind was clear. His plans were more vague for, as has been truly said, "his was a mind which did not form plans but was inspired by ideas" (Seeley, *British Foreign Policy*, II. p. 73): if he had himself in mind when he uttered his famous aphorism "None goes so far as he who knows not whither he is going", it must be said that he showed a self-knowledge very unusual among statesmen.



How vague his plans were, can be judged from the curious expedition on which he launched Blake in the Mediterranean with twenty-five ships, threatening the Duke of Tuscany and the Pope, bombarding the Barbary pirates, and "showing the flag" at Malta, Venice, Naples and Toulon: next year he headed, with the enthusiastic approval of his Secretary, Milton, the agitation against the Duke of Savoy and the French on behalf of the "slaughtered saints" of the Alpine valleys.

The third or anti-Spanish phase of his policy begins with an expedition to the West Indies, which recalls the days of the Elizabethan seamen, or Raleigh's hapless enterprise under James I. But this time Penn and Venables had the authority of the government behind them, and on their return they were thrown into the Tower, not for taking Jamaica but for failing to take San Domingo. The object of the expedition was to assert the rights of Englishmen to settle in the West Indies from which the Pope's decision (p. 173) debarred them, but Philip IV very naturally declared war. How aggressive English policy was, appeared clearly in the alliance which we now made with France, providing that the allies should take the three Spanish towns of Gravelines, Mardyck and Dunkirk—the last to be England's share of the spoil.

What Cromwell's own feelings were, is clear from his speech to Parliament announcing the war—"You are at war with Spain. The Spaniard is your enemy, naturally and providentially, by reason of that enmity that is in him against whatever is of God". The alliance with France is justified because they are less bound to the Pope. "The Papists in England have been accounted, ever since I was born, Spaniolised." So lasting was the memory of poor Queen Mary.

Our army went to France side by side with the French and won a great victory \* (1658) at the Battle of the Dunes.

It is curious to recall that, exactly a century before, the French, Spanish and English had been engaged in a great battle on almost the same ground: in each case England was on the winning side, but the sides had changed. At St. Quentin (1558) we sided with the Spaniards and lost Calais; at the Dunes we fought against them and won Dunkirk. The first battle led to the Treaty of Cateau

\* On seeing the enemy the English gave a loud cheer: the French inquired the reason, and the answer was that "it was an usual custom of the Red-coats when they saw the enemy to Rejoyce". (*The Great Condt* (Godley), p. 497.)

Cambresis which founded Spanish power, the second to the Peace of the Pyrenees (1659) which destroyed it (cf. p. 192).

How far Cromwell might have gone with Dunkirk as his base we cannot tell: perhaps it is fortunate for us and for his fame that he died that year: a visionary with a strong army and navy at his hand is a dangerous person. With his death ended the Military State of which he was the incarnation: we revert to the family or dynastic policies of the Stuarts, almost equally dangerous and certainly less patriotic, until circumstances force on us a national policy once more.

### *Charles II (1660-85). James II (1685-88)*

Halifax may have been right in saying that "should nobody throw a stone at the faults of Charles II but those who are free from them, there would be but a slender shower", but no amount of charity can force us to deny that he was a thoroughly bad king. It could hardly be otherwise when (as Halifax himself admits) "the love of Ease exercised an entire sovereignty in his Thoughts". Personally, no doubt, he was most attractive, like his grandfather, Henry IV, whom he resembles also in his cheerful indifference both to principle and to morality. "He had a natural and therefore inimitable force in dissembling", wrote one of his Secretaries of State. His faults as a sovereign will be most clearly seen if we look first at his foreign policy, which indeed accounts for the demoralisation which he brought into English political life.\*

There is a further reason for concentrating attention on this subject, to the comparative neglect of internal affairs. This is the first time when the foreign policy of England begins to be of vital consequence to Europe as a whole, and what happened under the last two Stuarts affected that policy for at least a century to come. In this period also we notice that Europe affects our internal policy: the Great Rebellion (by our great good fortune) remained a purely domestic affair: the Revolution was of European

\* It should, in justice, be remembered that from the first Charles was in a very difficult position so far as finance was concerned. It was Parliament's refusal to vote him an adequate income, and not his own extravagance, which caused him to take Louis as his paymaster. His object was to outwit a hostile Parliament, and his tricks, if dirty, were no dirtier than those of such opponents as Shaftesbury; but, in spite of Halifax, we are right in asking a higher standard from our kings. Still, Charles was not to blame for the general financial situation: "so long as the king who controlled the executive had no power to make Parliament give him money, and no machinery to bridge the gulf between current expenditure and future income, a protracted national war could only end in bankruptcy". (*Reprint's Papers*, I, 214.)

concern, and was effected in the end by a Dutch fleet. Let us see how this came about.

Charles had not been restored by any foreign power—a fact described by Ranke as “one of the most important of negative events”: this meant that he was free to choose his friends abroad, and the obvious choice for a wife lay between France and Spain.

It might be thought that the former was his obvious ally, but it had just been in alliance with Cromwell, and the Duke of York, as we have seen, had fought, with the King's Guard, for Spain. If Philip IV had agreed, history might have taken a different turn, and England and Spain together might have checked Louis XIV's career: but with incredible folly he refused. Charles was now offered the hand of the Portuguese princess, Catherine of Braganza, which involved hostility to Spain: he was thus thrown back into the arms of Louis, and the first stage had begun of the journey which led to the Treaty of Dover and subjection to France.

This marriage had very definite advantages: it brought money, and the possession of Bombay (and Tangier); Charles was, as it were, committed to the colonial side of Cromwell's policy, for there could now be no question of restoring Jamaica to Spain, and, indeed, the reign was notable for our colonial progress: North and South Carolina were founded, and, by the taking of the Dutch possessions in North America, our territory became continuous through the addition of New York, New Jersey, Delaware and Pennsylvania. So far there was no apparent change of policy, though, having no army, for that had been at once disbanded, Charles had no temptation to militarist adventure. Dunkirk, no longer useful, was sold, but to France, and not to its old Spanish owners.

But in his dealings with the Dutch Charles developed a policy of his own: he detested the Republican Government and wished to see the House of Orange in power again: *Orange op, Wit onder* was his motto. War with Holland was a popular cause, and, on the whole, we had the better of the second Dutch war (1667) and secured New York, though the Medway episode (see p. 264) left a nasty taste in the national mouth. When the Triple Alliance with Holland and Sweden was signed next year it might seem that all was very well.

But here begins the story of Charles's treachery. Temple, to whose genius the Triple Alliance was mainly due, had for some years thought of Louis as “a great comet, expecting not only to be

gazed at but admired". Charles was only too ready to "admire", and, indeed, to imitate: his admiration combined with his hatred of de Witt, and the course which he took was characteristically perfidious.

The Triple Alliance was signed in 1668. Two years later Charles signed at Dover a treaty with Louis, providing not only for the partition of Holland, our ally, but, by a secret clause, arranging that he should declare himself a Catholic "at a convenient opportunity", and should receive money and soldiers from Louis to repress any disturbance. The public treaty was a disgrace to the nation, explained, but not excused, by resentment at the Medway disaster: the secret treaty was a disgrace to the king, incapable of any excuse and at first sight difficult to explain.

His first reason was probably his want of money, for Parliament by a recent and important decision had very wisely provided that any money it granted should be applied strictly to the purposes for which the grant was made: if Charles was to imitate his cousin Louis he needed more than that. Again, he had no doubt wished to ruin de Witt. But his real motive is explained in his own words that it was "the only way of re-establishing the monarchy" (Seeley, *ibid.*, II, 187).

In this, his main object, he proceeded with a caution and a secrecy which contrast with "the bluff and blundering purposes" of James II: unlike him, he was prepared to draw back when he saw the danger signal, but their objects were much the same, except that the re-establishment of Catholicism, which was with James a passion, was with Charles merely an incident. But it was the Treaty of Dover which really made the Revolution inevitable.

The nation paid for its sin against good faith by taking a brief but inglorious part in Louis's war of revenge against the Dutch, of which de Ruyter was the hero: Charles, though successful in his object of overthrowing de Witt, paid for his greater crime by becoming for the rest of his reign the pensioner of France.

England, though ignorant of the secret treaty, took alarm, and Charles acquiesced in the Treaty of Westminster which united England and Holland once more, all the more readily as de Witt was gone and the chief power was now in the hands of a Prince of the Stuart House. But English national sentiment was far more anti-Catholic than he had realised, and between 1678-81 the country was entirely occupied with the Exclusion Bill (intended to keep James, now an avowed Catholic with a Catholic wife,

Mazarin's niece, from succeeding to the throne), and with the scoundrel Oates and his tale of a Popish plot. Charles drew in his horns: if he could not be a strong king like his cousin Louis, he had at least no intention of being a martyr like his father; he agreed to the marriage of his niece Mary to William of Orange, who, though a Protestant, was at least half a Stuart (1677). This caused Louis some alarm, and for the rest of Charles's reign he was occupied in bribing either the king, or Parliament, should Charles seem intractable or too friendly with his new Dutch nephew: by these means he secured the dismissal of Danby, to whose influence the Dutch marriage had been largely due.

We see how closely, thanks to Charles, England was now concerned with French affairs: its king (or its Parliament) was in French pay, at a moment when French designs were beginning to alarm the whole continent. When, in 1685, the Edict of Nantes was revoked and an avowed Catholic ascended the throne, it is easy to understand that the nation's nerves were on edge, and why it was inclined to assume that the aims of James and Louis were identical.

There was no reason why they should have been: James was a loyal servant of the Pope, whom Louis had treated with gross discourtesy, who had not greatly approved of the Revocation and was definitely opposing his schemes in the Low Countries, the last portion of the old Burgundian inheritance which he was now seeking to annex to France: it would have been perfectly possible for James, as a loyal Catholic, to join the anti-French League. Had he done so, he might have saved his throne.

But he was too much steeped in the French tradition of his mother, Henrietta-Maria, or perhaps too stupid, to realise his opportunity, and allowed himself to become identified in the people's mind with the intolerant traditions of Catholicism. Possibly his easy triumph over the Monmouth rebellion made him exaggerate his popularity in England. He was really only anxious to secure equal religious rights for Catholics, but, apparently from sheer stupidity, he broke with the Anglican Church, and gave every reason for the suspicion that he meant to impose his own will in disregard of law. In other words, he made it appear that Catholicism and arbitrary government (after the French model) were inseparable ideas. "There is no more remarkable instance of perversity than his setting the Tories against him by attacking the Church of England." (F. S. Oliver, *The Endless Adventure*, I, 118.)

No course could have been more fatal to his cause. Europe could not run the risk of seeing the English Navy thrown on the side of France: England was in no mood—as the acquittal of the seven Bishops showed—to tolerate a Stuart despotism. The army and navy promised William their support: he landed at Torbay and the Revolution was really over: as long as he lived there could be no more uncertainty about the foreign policy of England. The stupid but fundamentally honest James had lost in three years what his clever but fundamentally dishonest brother had held for a quarter of a century. His services to the navy are too often forgotten \*: there would seem to be a fatality attending on Dukes of York, for few remember that Frederick, son of George III, was “an unassailable tower of strength to the British Army, trusted by all ranks from the private to the general”. (Fortescue, XI, 45.)

We have only space to discuss one of the domestic problems of Charles's reign—the religious question. The Cavalier Parliament met in a frame of mind which, though very natural, was very un-Christian: the Church had suffered very cruelly, and Parliament was in no mood to allow Charles to keep his promise that “no man should be called in question for differences of opinion on matters of religion which do not disturb the peace of the Kingdom” (which probably represented his own belief), and, after the failure of an attempt at the Savoy Conference to induce Puritans and Presbyterians to reconsider their grievances against the Prayer Book, it proceeded to avenge the Church with equal cruelty. Two thousand Puritan clergy were expelled with no compensation and a series of discreditable acts passed to cripple all Puritan activities.† For these the best that can be said is that they were not consistently enforced. The virus of intolerance was deeply planted in English religious life, and a Revolution would be necessary before the process of expulsion could begin.

The time of the later Stuarts marks a distinctive period in English literature and art. If the great name of Milton belongs rather to the Commonwealth, it was after the Restoration that he

\* As were, till recently, those of Samuel Pepys, “possibly” (in the words of Mr. Ogg) “the greatest administrator in the history of the British Navy” and “the greatest of Civil servants”.

† The Act of Uniformity (1662) was quite right to assert that “nothing contributes more to the settling of the Peace of this Nation (which is desired by all good men) than an universal agreement in the Publick Worship of Almighty God”, but it was an unfortunate choice of words which made His Majesty declare that dissenters were “followers of their own sensuality”.

did his greatest work: Dryden (*d.* 1699) is the greatest of English satirists. The lovely ornate prose of Clarendon and Isaak Walton passes soon into the simple directness appropriate to a business-like nation—the prose of Steele and Addison and Swift. Architecture, thanks to Wren and Inigo Jones, escapes the infection of the baroque disease which afflicted most of Europe. The national taste for music found full scope, and Purcell (*d.* 1695), had he lived longer, might have founded a school of English music strong enough to hold its own against the great influence of Handel. The names of Newton (1642-1727) and Boyle are as famous in science as that of Bentley (Master of Trinity 1700) in scholarship. But perhaps the most influential of all English thinkers was Locke (*d.* 1704), who formulated a doctrine of the Revolution which, though not strictly historical, came to be universally accepted, and whose noble Letter on Toleration helped his generation to see that “the jurisdiction of the magistrate neither can nor ought to be extended to the salvation of souls”, and that “Truth would do well enough if she were once made to shift for herself”.

### *William III (1688-1702)*

It will be convenient first to consider this aspect of the various changes brought about by the Revolution. Toleration may seem a strange lesson for us to have begun to learn from a Calvinist king, but William had learnt its necessity at home, and the movement which summoned him to England was representative of all sections of the community. King James, like King John, served England well by his faults: John’s folly lost us France and forced us to concentrate on England: the folly of James taught Whigs and Tories, High Churchmen and Dissenters, to forget their quarrels for a time, and it was natural that the result should be to produce a more tolerant atmosphere. Tolerance, it is true, was regarded not as a great principle, but as a disagreeable necessity, but it began to be shown. Nonconformists were given the right to their worship, and though the laws against Papists were not relaxed (as indeed could hardly be expected at the moment), they were seldom enforced, and, generally speaking, it may be said that freedom of worship was secured.

From the English point of view it is natural to concentrate on the political changes of the time: the Tories had to surrender their theory of “the divine right of kings” in favour of a right declared by Parliament, though some of the best of the clergy,

refusing to imitate the Vicar of Bray, became "non-jurors", to the great loss of the Church: the powers of the Crown were limited and the freedom of Parliament secured by the Bill of Rights (1689), while the Protestant succession was assured by the Act of Settlement (1701), whereby provision was made for the accession of the House of Hanover, should none of Anne's sixteen children live to inherit the throne: the position of judges was safeguarded, it being laid down that they were to hold office "so long as they behaved well". It may be said that the Constitution, as we know it, came into being.

But a change equally great came about in our foreign policy: for a century at least we ceased to be a people *dont la légèreté est connue* and became one with a fixed antagonism to France. This antagonism might not, but for the incredible folly of Louis, have survived William's death in 1702, but, as it was, it became the dominating fact of our history in the eighteenth century. Thanks to this folly, William's great achievement in holding together the European coalition in the war of 1689-97 was successfully repeated after he was dead, and the soldiers he had trained in his long and tedious struggle were ready to be led to victory by Marlborough in the War of the Spanish Succession. We must now consider briefly the course of the earlier war, the only one which William lived to fight.

Louis had chosen to attack Germany and the Empire at the moment when their credit and self-respect had been raised by the defeat of the Turks, and when Hohenzollern and Hapsburg were for once prepared to act together: as we have seen, he had no allies, and yet he took no adequate steps to ensure at least the neutrality of England. Whether James would ultimately have consented to help him by more than passive acquiescence must remain uncertain: what is certain is that the Dutch thought he would, otherwise they would not have consented to William's taking a Dutch army and navy to England in the hour of their own peril: and any uncertainty which the English may have felt was dispelled when James fled to France and Louis gave him active assistance both by land and sea. Henceforth France was the enemy.

For a time the situation was very anxious: the French fleet, thanks to Colbert the strongest in Europe, defeated the Dutch and English as decisively at Beachy Head as a French army defeated the Dutch in Holland: when William crossed to Ireland, Mary



was doubtful if she would ever see him again; but a month later came the victory of the Boyne, and in 1692 the great triumph of the navy at La Hogue, which gave us the command of the Channel, removed the danger of invasion and pointed the way to Trafalgar. Louis never recovered from the great mistake he made in allowing William to cross to England, which he had it in his power to prevent, either by a wise use of his fleet or by a rapid invasion of Holland.

From this time England became a great liability to Louis instead of the great asset for which he had hoped: he had to fight with the command of the sea lost to him, and our ships were able to act with effect in the Mediterranean. On land he was mainly successful, for William was a tenacious rather than a skilful general,\* but what he needed was a decisive victory, and that he could not obtain. With taxation doubled, and a coinage debased, France gradually became exhausted, and the army cost too much to allow her navy to be adequately maintained. The Treaty of Ryswick (1697) marks the first decisive rebuff which he had sustained. He was forced to acknowledge William as King of England (cf. p. 262). Thus the French intervention, designed to overthrow the Revolution, in the end not only consolidated it, but fixed France for a long time in the English mind as the national enemy—a position which it had not held since the end of the Hundred Years War.

It is impossible to call William's character attractive. "Stern, hard and cold", says one historian: "heartless, unscrupulous, pitiless and self-concentrated", adds another: and he had none of the personal gifts and graces which invite affection. Against this formidable array of adjectives we can only set the all-atoning fact that, in the words of one of these same critics, "he never for an instant was tempted to put personal ambition before public duty: he would not recognise failure nor accept defeat". These last were precisely the qualities of which Europe at the moment stood in need, and England need not be ashamed to acknowledge the greatness of her own debt to him. Serving a country which he did not love, and which did not love him, he received little gratitude in his lifetime, for he formed no political party of his own, but tried to govern on those non-party lines which the country will only tolerate in hours of crisis. But he accomplished his purpose. On his flag when he sailed to England were the words *Pro Libero*

\* "A very clever amateur," says Fortescue, "a general by book not by instinct."

*Parliamento, Pro Protestante Religione*, and beneath, the motto of his House, *Je maintiendrai*: he kept his word.\*

### *Europe's Debt to the Dutch*

This is perhaps the right place at which to acknowledge our debt to the Dutch, and we should do so the more willingly because we had a large share in the process which reduced her from the level of a first-rate power: it was London which replaced Amsterdam as the banking centre of the world.

The first half of the seventeenth century was her golden age; it was Holland which then supplied Europe with thinkers, publicists, theologians, men of science, artists and gardeners, and her influence was profound. We cannot afford space to speak of the work of Descartes (a French refugee) or of Spinoza: we can only to mention the names of Van Dyck, Franz Hals and Rembrandt. But we must find space to dwell on the Dutch contribution to political theory and practice.

Set as they were "in the very Thermopylae of the universe", they saved Europe from the aggression of Spain and established "a free State in a world rapidly tending to a uniformity of absolutism—a Calvinist Teutonic federalism": they taught lessons by which the authors of our Revolution and the founders of the United States of America were in turn to profit. Finally, it was a Dutchman, Grotius, who in his great work *De iure belli et pacis*, laid down the principles of international politics, asserting (as against the school of Machiavelli and Hobbes) that there are such things as law and right, and that without good faith and a respect for the natural law "men will be like unto the brutes that perish" (*Fide sublata feris erunt similes*). It was the Dutch who, in their conception of men as "in a society bound together by a natural law which makes promises binding", found a middle course between the exaltation of royal power and the suspicion of all State authority: and Grotius was perhaps the first who dared to hope that nations would come to regard themselves as members of a similar society. (Figgis, *op. cit.*, Lecture 7.)

Philip IV, before he died in 1665, had, as we have seen (see p. 250), lost territory to France and had been forced to recognise the independence of Portugal: his unfortunate son, Charles II,

\* His dislike of parties was natural, for while the Whigs wished, in his opinion, to make him "a Venetian Doge", the Tories would not agree to regard him as "the rightful King", but only as King *de facto*, or, at best, as "having the right by law", a phrase which suggested that the law might alter.

was to be the last of the Spanish Hapsburgs. His unexpected birth was a blow to Mazarin, who had arranged Louis XIV's marriage with Philip's daughter by an earlier marriage, but as he was a sickly child it was legitimate to expect his death. But he survived, "one of the most pathetic figures in modern history", to keep the chancelleries of Europe in constant expectation, for some forty years, and his death in 1700, besides ending his line, was to plunge Spain and Europe into war. It is a pathetic comment on the results of Spanish Hapsburg rule that "the richest and most religious monarchy in the world was unable to defray the cost of the masses said for the soul of the deceased king". (Ogg, *Europe in the Seventeenth Century*, p. 377.) His will provides the most obvious link between the seventeenth century and its successor.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### The Eighteenth Century to 1789

To describe a century in a sentence is a difficult and dangerous task. To some writers the eighteenth century is the century of "commercial wars", but (even if the Trojan war was not, as some maintain, a commercial affair) trade has always in human history led to fighting, and Louis's attack on the Dutch was not unconnected with Colbert's policy of protection. Others call it the century when seaborne traffic became a vital question, but the desire of Sweden to make the Baltic a Swedish lake had already given rise to wars for a hundred years: others, again, call it the century of "national expansion", though it is difficult to distinguish between the desire of Frederic the Great to expand and consolidate Prussia and that of Louis XIV in an earlier day to do the same for France. Some distinguished writers call it the century in which "national policies" superseded "dynastic", forgetting that several of the eighteenth-century wars were directly caused by dynastic questions. If, as is generally agreed, it was the "century of reason and common sense", it is depressing to reflect that reason and common sense by no means averted war.\*

We must look deeper for any real difference between the eighteenth century and its predecessors, and may take as a starting point the verdict of Monsieur Lavissee that it was a century "without principles, without the restraint of honesty or honour, without generosity and without pity". Though it is hard to bring an indictment against a whole century, there is considerable ground for the accusation. It was the time of the rise to influence of the middle class, naturally preoccupied with trade and with no inherited tradition of responsibility for others: in economic matters, its general characteristic was a belief that success was the proof of divine approval, which led in practice to an attitude of *laissez faire* to be consecrated, in the last quarter of the century, by the doctrines of Adam Smith. The "reason" which it prided itself on following was contemptuous of sentiment and disposed to limit

\* It has been claimed for eighteenth-century wars that they were political affairs not implying national animosity nor interrupting intercommunication in cultural affairs, until the French Revolution ruined everything by restoring idealism to war. There is a grain of truth in this cynical view.

man's horizon to this world. This is a cause of satisfaction for those thinkers who hold, for some obscure reason, that to fight for a creed is less noble than to fight for a colony, though their satisfaction might be tempered by the thought that religious antagonism between North and South Germany had much to do with the antagonism between Austria and Prussia.

Broadly speaking, it cannot be denied that profit was the main object both of nations and individuals; in a sense this has always been true, but in this century it was pursued with an almost complete disregard of principle. It was not till the French Revolution that any great principle came again to the front, and whatever we may think of the "rights of man" as a slogan, it was at least not entirely self-regarding, and drew public attention to the condition of the poor, who had long been passively exploited. Till 1789 the story is essentially prosaic: it was ultimately for prosaic causes that most of the great deeds were done by land and sea, though this does not detract from the heroism of the actors. Even the American Revolution, great achievement as it was, was in its origin a prosaic dispute which a little wisdom and charity on either side could easily have settled. The one really heroic figure of these years, George Washington,\* shines out as an unselfish man in a self-seeking age as Chatham did in England. Frederic the Great is a more normal representative of the century.

There was plenty of material in Europe on which the acquisitive tendencies of the various nations could work. As we have already seen, a league of Russia, Poland and Denmark had been formed against Sweden in 1699, and it was easy to see that its result would involve considerable changes on the map. Again, in 1700, the King of Spain ended his thirty-five years of nominal rule, and the question who was to succeed him, which had long agitated the chancelleries of Europe, at once became acute. But before dealing with the two resulting wars, both of which were in a sense legacies from the previous century, we will glance at the situation in Germany which was closely concerned with them both.

Brandenburg, or Prussia (as we must now begin to call her), set before herself an obvious goal—the union of her scattered dominions. As long as Poland held West Prussia, that union was incomplete on the east: as long as Sweden held West Pomerania, she was separated from her scattered possessions on the west. To

\* "It is pleasant to think", says Mr. Rowse, "that he came of oldest English stock, of a Durham family going far back into the Middle Ages." (*Op. cit.*, p. 94.)

the south lay Saxony and Austria, the one a Protestant country ruled by a brother Elector, the other ruled by a Catholic emperor whom they had united to elect: expansion to the south would not be easy: Sweden and Poland were the immediate problems. The right policy clearly was to build up a strong army, to unite and discipline the people, and to wait on events. But it was inevitable that the Great Elector should dream of a great future, and as the Elector of Saxony had just been elected King of Poland (1697) it was natural for the feeling to arise that Brandenburg was equally worthy of a crown.

Austria, since the title of emperor had become almost purely honorary, was naturally more concerned with her own affairs, and those affairs certainly gave much ground for thought. The Hapsburg dominions contained Germans, Bohemians, Poles, Hungarians, Slavs and Italians, all with different languages and different political traditions. Austria's task, like that of Prussia, was to unite them, but it was a far harder task, and far less efficiently performed. Since the seventeenth century it was becoming more clear that her destiny lay down the Danube, but the Empire, that fatal gift, entangled her hopelessly in the affairs of the West, and, like France, she was unable to resist the lure of Italy. Another trouble was already looming on the horizon, for it seemed that the male line of the Hapsburgs might well die out, and no woman had ever succeeded to the hereditary dominions of the House.

This situation, we cannot doubt, had already attracted the attention of the Elector of Bavaria, who had some Hapsburg blood in his veins (and had married a Hapsburg wife), so that he had some shadowy claim to Hapsburg possessions, if a male heir was necessary; other possibilities were also open: the Wittelsbachs, he might think, were as ancient a family as the Hapsburgs, to whom they were themselves related: might not a Wittelsbach one day sit again on the imperial throne—"the dread summit of Caesarean power"?

Another power with its eye on the future was Savoy, commanding the entry for France into Italy, and ruled by a duke conscious of the strength of his position, and entirely ready to sell his alliance to the highest bidder in the national interest.

### *The War of the Spanish Succession 1702-14*

To an Englishman this war suggests primarily the astonishing

achievements of Marlborough, a very legitimate subject of national pride, but this tends to make us forget how widespread the war was: we shall not understand why Blenheim was fought on the Danube unless we look first at the general situation.

By 1700 there were only two candidates for the crown of Spain in the field—the Archduke Charles, second son of the emperor, and Philip, second son of the Dauphin, and therefore grandson of Louis XIV. By the latest Partition treaty (1699) it had been agreed that Spain, the Netherlands and the Indies should go to Charles, while Philip received the Spanish possessions in Italy, with the prospect of exchanging some of them for Lorraine. The powers as a whole had accepted it, but the emperor withheld his ratification in the hope that the dying king might by a last-minute will give his son the whole inheritance. No more disastrous miscalculation was ever made: a last-minute will was indeed made, but it gave the whole inheritance to Philip: the fatal charm of Italy had been at work once more on the emperor's mind, and as usual with results disastrous to Germany.

Louis took a fortnight to deliberate, and finally decided to accept the crown of Spain on behalf of his grandson. It is difficult to blame him, for the chance of finally abolishing the Pyrenees was in his grasp, and the risk in acceptance seemed reasonably slight. England, in spite of (or because of) William's opposition, was prepared to acquiesce: \* the Dutch by themselves were not formidable: Germany as a whole was apathetic, and the emperor was powerless alone: Savoy was easily to be bought and would give him access into Italy, Austria's Achilles heel. But at this moment Louis chose to ruin his entire plan by three acts of gratuitous folly: he expelled the Dutch troops from their border fortresses, issued commercial decrees debarring Dutch and English ships from the Spanish-American trade, and finally recognised James III as rightful King of England, in defiance of his promise given at Ryswick. The result was immediate, and William before he died had the satisfaction of seeing the Grand Alliance made between England, the Emperor, the Dutch and the King of Prussia.† War was declared in 1702.

\* Dryden's lines express the national sentiment:

Enough for Europe has great Albion fought;  
Let us enjoy the peace our blood has bought.

(*Feeling, op. cit.*, p. 347.)

† The Elector had got his title acknowledged by the emperor in 1701.

We have no space to discuss its course in detail.\* Louis had three allies: Bavaria (it was to punish this rebellious vassal of the Emperor that Blenheim was fought) and, till 1703, Portugal and Savoy: thereafter the allies had to try to save Savoy from Louis' vengeance. He never had the command of the sea, thanks to his neglect of the navy, and in 1704 Rooke (much to his own surprise) captured Gibraltar, which was gallantly held. In 1707 our fleet took Sardinia and Minorca with its great harbour of Port Mahon. In the Netherlands he lost great battles through his bad choice of generals and his insufficient use of Villars, who made Malplaquet a costly success to Marlborough. Had it not been for the constant hindrances which the nervousness of the Dutch put in Marlborough's way, the French would have suffered more severely, and been more speedily and decisively beaten.

Even as it was, thanks to Marlborough and that great soldier Prince Eugene, Louis was forced to sue for peace in 1709: he would have accepted almost any terms, but the Whigs clung to their absurd formula "No peace without Spain", and demanded that he should join in expelling his grandson. This was too much, and France joined him in carrying on the fight for five years more. The position of the allies became ridiculous, for, on the one hand, Spain rallied round Philip, and our campaigns there, after some showy successes, ended in failure, and, on the other, Charles, the candidate of the allies, succeeded his brother as emperor in 1711. The Whig government fell, and the Tories under Bolingbroke, though they behaved with gross treachery to the Dutch and with shameful ingratitude to Marlborough, made what was, on the whole, a sensible peace.

The Peace of Utrecht (1713) cannot be called vindictive: of the losers, Spain kept the king of her choice, though her Italian

\* By way of atonement for this omission, let us quote some sentences in which the historian of the British Army pays tribute to "the great man who revived the ancient glory of Crécy, Poitiers and Agincourt". "He was endowed with a strong common sense that in itself amounted to genius"; in this Wellington resembled him, but "there was a bond of humanity between him and his men that was lacking in Wellington, whose army could never have nicknamed him the Old Corporal". "He possessed in the most trying moments a serenity and calm that was almost miraculous. But there was no coldness in his serenity and nothing impassive in his calm." For he had that "patience which can overcome all things in such measure that it appears almost god-like". "It is in the perfect balance of transcendent ability that Marlborough takes rank with the mightiest of England's sons . . . as (in Bolingbroke's words) 'the greatest statesman and the greatest general that this country or any other country has produced'." (Fortescue, I, 590 ff.) Few things are more to his credit than the way in which he stamped the impress of his own patience and humanity "on troops recruited by the press gang, by hunger, or from prisons". (Oliver, *op. cit.* I, 139.)



possessions, the Netherlands, Gibraltar and Minorca, were lost: she was also allowed, to our great discredit, to avenge herself on the Catalans, who had fought on our side: France lost some fortresses on the Rhine, as well as Newfoundland and Hudson Bay: she had to recognise the House of Hanover, and to abandon those Italian dreams which had floated before her eyes, like a will-o'-the-wisp, since 1494; but a French king sat securely on the Spanish throne. Of the chief victors, the emperor received Naples, the Milanese and Sardinia (the beginning of Austrian domination in Italy) and the Netherlands (to serve as a buffer against French ambition): the Dutch got their frontier fortresses (as an additional protection): England kept Gibraltar, Nova Scotia and Minorca, and received Newfoundland, Hudson Bay and the right of trading (principally in slaves) with certain towns in Spanish-American waters. Of the minor combatants, the King of Prussia had his royal title generally recognised, and received some land west of the Rhine (a further precaution against France), while the Duke of Savoy was given some of the Milanese, all of which he coveted, and, as an unexpected windfall, the island of Sicily, with the title of King, for England did not wish to see it in French or Austrian hands.

### *The War in the North 1700-20*

While this war was in progress, another and not less important struggle was going on in North-Eastern Europe. When the coalition attacked Sweden (see p. 256), they little realised that the young king, Charles XII, was a born general of military genius. In 1700 he made a dash on Copenhagen and subdued Denmark: he proceeded to the Gulf of Finland and with 8,000 Swedes utterly defeated Peter's army of 60,000: he might possibly have taken Moscow. But, in 1702, he turned on Poland and occupied Warsaw, deposing its Saxon king, and, by a threat of invading Saxony, forced him to recognise the Polish king Stanislas whom he set up in his place.

By 1707, at the age of twenty-five, he was master of the Baltic and of the regions round it: Louis XIV and Marlborough were both angling for his alliance, while Peter was ready to pay heavily for a peace. But Charles decided that his mission was to conquer Russia, which he invaded next year in alliance with the Cossack Mazeppa. But Peter had learnt his lesson and reorganised his army, and in 1709 beat him overwhelmingly at Poltawa. Charles

took refuge with the Turks, with whom he remained for five years, continuing to direct the foreign policy of Sweden. The Turks in the end decided to support him, and carried on a successful campaign against Russia. Charles returned to Sweden, but the Peace of Utrecht lessened his value as a possible ally, and for the rest of his life he was engaged in unsuccessful wars with his old enemies, until "an unknown hand" fired the bullet which killed him before "a petty fortress" in Norway (1718). The Peace of Nystadt gave Russia much of the Baltic coast, including Livonia and Esthonia: Hanover took Bremen, Prussia part of Swedish Pomerania, and Stettin at the mouth of the Oder: Augustus of Saxony regained the throne of Poland, and the "name at which the world grew pale" was heard no more.

### *Russia*

The main result of this war was to make Russia definitely a great power. This was the achievement of Peter the Great (1682-1725), one of the most astonishing figures in history, at times an enlightened despot and at times a drunken and bloodthirsty savage. He enlarged Russia's territories, as we have seen, and established himself as "Protector" of Poland. But even more important were the changes he introduced in Russia itself. His travels as a young man had impressed him with Western efficiency, and he began the task of civilising his barbarous people, using foreign ministers when none could be found at home. He founded St. Petersburg, reorganised the country into eight vast provinces, stimulated the life of towns (which had never thriven in Russia), and directed education so as to train both bureaucrats and soldiers. He tried to bring the nobles into public service under his despotic eye, though he had no undue reverence for high birth, as is shown by the fact that Field-Marshal Prince Menschikoff was the son of a pastry-cook, and Hannibal, who rose to high command, a negro. At Peter's death the regular army was over 200,000, with more than 100,000 irregular Cossack cavalry, and his navy included twenty-eight ships of the line. In 1721 for the first time he assumed the imposing title of Emperor of all the Russias, which was both a definite challenge to Poland and also an assertion of equality with the other sovereigns of Europe.

Europe was naturally nervous as to the use which might be made of this great force, and the rise of Russia clearly raised many problems for the future. Was Poland, for instance, to fall entirely

under her influence, or were Austria and Prussia equally concerned? In the Balkans, again, was Austria or Russia to be the protagonist of Christian Europe against the Turk? We see the rise of questions which were to distract both the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

### *Europe 1714-41*

The period between the peace of Utrecht and the War of the Austrian Succession (1714-40) has been described as one of "congresses without issue, campaigns without visible objective, open treaties, secret articles, public alliances and private combinations" (Morley, *Walpole*, p. 200): it would be a waste of time to wander long in the maze. We will rather try to sketch briefly the guiding principles and the leading personalities which directed the course of the chief states of Europe.

No single personality affected Europe more than that of the Emperor Charles VI (1711-40)—the victim of several obstinate obsessions: he was unwilling to forgive Spain for having preferred a Bourbon king (whom he always referred to as Duke of Anjou): he was very reluctant to see any other power grow strong in Italy: he had a permanent hankering for a share in the American trade, which neither Spain nor England wished him to secure. But, above all, he was permanently and pathetically anxious to secure signatures for the "Pragmatic Sanction" guaranteeing the possessions of his House to his daughter Maria Theresa: it took him thirteen years to gather all the signatures in, and between 1725 and 1738 this consideration would always ultimately decide Austrian policy.

In France the Regent Orleans held power during the king's minority (till 1723): as he was anxious not only to secure his present position but also the reversion of the throne should the young king die, he had a bond of sympathy with England, which had a succession problem of its own. Hence came an uneasy (and indeed unnatural) alliance with this country, encouraged by two Cardinals, the one disreputable, Dubois (till 1723) and the other, Fleury, the reverse (1726-42)—but the latter was never whole-hearted in his friendship and was more trusted by Walpole than he deserved. Fleury's great achievement was to secure the reversion of Lorraine to France after the War of the Polish Succession.

But in France there was always a strong Spanish party which hoped that, should the opportunity arise, Philip of Spain would

disregard his promises and claim the French throne. This party succeeded in arranging a marriage between the young king and the Spanish Infanta (then aged three), but in 1725 this engagement was broken off and he was married to the daughter of the ex-King Stanislas of Poland, which led in due course to "the torpid, grotesque and inglorious war of the Polish Succession". \*

In Spain, the dominant personality was Philip's second wife, Elizabeth Farnese of Parma, a descendant of the Great Duke of Parma, with much of her ancestor's energy but little of his discretion. Her ruling passion was to secure an inheritance for her children, especially in her native Italy; † she was ably served by the Italian Cardinal Alberoni (1715-19), who had something titanic about him and did much to restore Spanish power, especially at sea. "The Termagant" (as Elizabeth was called) forced him to act before he was ready, and, though a sudden expedition captured Sardinia, an attempt on Sicily led to the destruction of his fleet by Byng off Cape Passaro, in a somewhat unscrupulous effort to preserve the peace of Europe.‡

Spain was permanently and naturally anxious to recover Gibraltar and Minorca: this, and our wholesale smuggling in America, prevented any firm friendship with England. During this period Spain was drifting into a family alliance with France, which became definite in 1733; luckily for us this was at first based on hostility to Austria, and their forces were wasted in land operations against her.

The Duke of Savoy, Victor Amadeus II (1675-1732), King of Sicily since the Peace of Utrecht, "a man of lionlike courage and foxlike cunning", was solely actuated by the desire to make the most of his fortunate position on the Italian frontier, and was prepared to make, or break, any alliance which improved it: neither Austria nor Spain viewed his aspirations with favour.

Russia had secured Finland as the price of neutrality when Charles XII set out on his final and fatal expedition against

\* Another dramatic figure in France in these years was the Scotsman Law, whose bold financial schemes might have benefited the country; but his plan to develop the Mississippi on borrowed money collapsed like the South Sea Bubble, and for somewhat similar reasons—the laws of high finance being at least as inerrable to statesmen of the eighteenth century as to those of the twentieth.

† She was, in the end, singularly successful, for her eldest son, Don Carlos, was successively Duke of Parma (1731), King of Naples (1734) and King of Spain (1759), and was succeeded by his brother as Duke of Parma.

‡ The last words of Captain Walton's despatch to Byng, "we have taken and destroyed all the Spanish ships which were upon the coast, the number as per margin" may have inspired an equally laconic despatch from General Alexander.

Norway (1718): the torpid regime of Anne (1730-40) kept her country inactive. Frederic William I of Prussia (1713-40), though anxious to enlarge his dominions, was not prepared to risk the army which was the pride of his heart, and continued to prepare it for a later day. Denmark was as hostile as ever to Sweden, and Sweden to Russia. In England the dominant figure is that of Walpole, and it is permissible for an Englishman to thank the Providence which gave him power during the emergency for which he might seem to have been created, just as in 1756 it turned Pitt from a reckless freelance into a sober and hard-working minister; from 1721-42 Walpole enjoyed "the unenthusiastic favour" of his fellow-countrymen. Till 1745 England was threatened with danger from the Jacobites, whom Charles XII, Alberoni and Fleury were at different times ready to support; but the death of Louis XIV in the year of the '15 had seemed to timorous English Jacobites to excuse them from any active support of the cause in the future. Walpole's objects were to keep himself in power and the Hanoverians on the throne, and to foster the country's prosperity—a prosperity in which no one class was to gain conspicuously at the expense of another. In these objects he was admirably successful, and though he, like other Prime Ministers,\* was unduly neglectful of foreign affairs, he, like Stanhope before him, rendered not wholly selfish service to the cause of European peace, which he came, mistakenly, to identify with that of national prosperity. It has been truly said that he aimed at peace but neglected safety. Of his character as a politician more will be said elsewhere (see p. 304). During all this period complications were caused (and more were feared) from the affection of the two first Georges for Hanover: later on, George II's detestation for his nephew Frederic of Prussia—"a mischievous rascal, a bad ally, a bad relation and a bad neighbour"—recalls the mutual hostility of Edward VII and his nephew William II.

### *The War of the Polish Succession 1733-38*

The question of succession to a throne dominated, in fact, the policies of England, Austria, France and Spain: it was the suc-

\* Marlborough and Godolphin had been called "the two Prime Ministers", and the title was given to Godolphin and Oxford singly; but probably because both were Lord High Treasurers. To Walpole it was given invidiously by his opponents: it was not generally recognised till the days of the younger Pitt, and only became official in those of Campbell Bannerman (B. Williams, *Stanhope*, p. 251).

cession to yet another throne, that of Poland, which first led to a definite state of war. Augustus the Strong (so called from the abnormal number of his illegitimate offspring) died in 1733, and Louis XV, against Fleury's wishes, decided to reinstate on the throne his Polish father-in-law Stanislas, who had been briefly placed there by Charles XII thirty years before: Austria and Russia decided to "protect" Poland and give her another Saxon king: Spain and Sardinia\* felt it their sacred duty to support France.

The war, in its course and issue, was characteristic of eighteenth-century methods and morals. It was fought mainly in Italy, because Spain and Sardinia wished to weaken Austria there: after a few months no one thought much of Poland, which, then as in later years, was inaccessible to her allies: Stanislas was rapidly expelled and another Saxon Augustus enthroned.

Everyone, losers as well as winners (with one exception) had reason to be well satisfied: Russia received the province of Courland: Austria, like her, got the candidate of her choice enthroned: the emperor collected some more signatures to the Pragmatic Sanction: France received Lorraine: Spain secured the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies for the Farnese prince Don Carlos: the Duke of Savoy, now King of Sardinia, strengthened his position in North Italy: Maria Theresa married the husband of her choice, the ex-Duke of Lorraine, which he exchanged for Tuscany. The one exception was poor Poland, for whose benefit the war was nominally undertaken: she lost a province and became more vulnerable to her neighbours. Of the rest, the King of Prussia alone was dissatisfied, for he, having taken little part in the war, for once got nothing: he no doubt began to reflect that if he could not be a "protector" of Poland (which seemed to be a profitable post) he might at least aspire to be one of her partitioners. Our refusal on technical grounds to support our ally the emperor was due to Walpole, who for the last two years had taken foreign affairs under his own control. He was reasonably proud of having saved English lives and English money, but he did so at the cost of annoying Austria, which never quite trusted us again.

This was somewhat serious, for the stage was set for a larger conflict: England and Spain began a desultory commercial war in 1739 (the war provoked by the ear of the notorious Jenkins), which merged almost imperceptibly into the War of the Austrian

\* I.e. Savoy: Sicily had been exchanged with Austria for Sardinia in 1718.

Succession: for the Emperor Charles VI, his last signature to the Pragmatic Sanction hopefully secured, died in 1740, and the Powers repudiated their signatures with an alacrity worthy of the age of common sense. It was an ominous fact that Frederic, afterwards called the Great, had ascended the throne of Prussia six months before.

### *The War of the Austrian Succession 1740-48*

The problem, in its essence, was a simple one: should Maria Theresa succeed peacefully, as Charles had wished and the Powers had promised, to the hereditary possessions of the Hapsburg House? It was complicated by another: who was to be the new emperor? Maria Theresa hoped it might be her husband Francis, but in both cases Bavaria provided an alternative solution: her Elector was the nearest approach available to a male Hapsburg, and he was eminently eligible as emperor.

But the war was precipitated, embittered and prolonged by Frederic's sudden invasion of Silesia, an act of sheer piracy, for which Carlyle is hard put to find excuse. It was only connected with "succession" by the fact that the early days of a new reign seemed to him to offer an admirable opportunity for a "realistic" policy.

So successful a crime invited imitation. In a short space of time France, Spain, Sweden and Saxony had agreed with Frederic that their signatures to the Pragmatic Sanction had been given under a strange misapprehension, that the Elector of Bavaria's claims were sound, and that he should also be elected emperor—as he was in 1742. But Maria Theresa found strong support in Hungary, and the "bold Bavarian" was driven out of his own capital of Munich.

England, at a distance and safe behind her sea, was able to indulge her romantic sympathy for the young queen without undue risk, but she was already at war with Spain, and Carteret, the new foreign minister—the first of our foreign ministers to favour a "spirited foreign policy"—had no difficulty in proving that we should take part in the general struggle: by 1744 we were definitely at war with France.

The war, that "unintelligible, huge, English and foreign delirium", as Carlyle called it, which lasted for eight years (1740-48), was remarkable for two reasons, first, for the way in which the robber powers fell out among themselves (Frederic

deserted France in 1742 and France deserted Frederic in 1744, while Saxony was equally inconstant), and secondly, for the number of separate, and often abortive, treaties made during its course. In the end, after much blood and treasure had been spent, the Peace of Aix la Chapelle established things much as they were before, with the one significant exception that Frederic retained Silesia.

He was the only one of the combatants who had solid reason for satisfaction: he had gained a large and valuable province and his army by its victory at Möllwitz had proved its quality, but he had had serious failures too, and his appetite was not satisfied: moreover he was nervous about the future attitude of Russia. The Elector of Bavaria had briefly held the Empire—he died in 1745—but his country had suffered severely and he had made no territorial gains. France had nothing to show, and Spain, now under a new king, had very little; the extremely capable ruler of Savoy (Sardinia) characteristically enlarged his territory at the expense both of France and of Austria.

On the other side, Maria Theresa was left with many grievances, the chief and unforgettable one being the loss of Silesia: she had also lost much land in Italy, though, on the credit side, her husband was now safely established as emperor, and Bavaria and Saxony had been taught a lesson. She was bitterly dissatisfied with all her allies: she had no sympathy whatever with the King of Sardinia's Italian ambitions: she blamed the Dutch for not defending their border fortresses and keeping the enemy out of the Netherlands, and England, not without reason, for a certain lukewarmness in her interests. She had no intention of acquiescing permanently in the new situation.

England's sailors had dominated the sea; \* her soldiers (and George II) had won a somewhat fortunate victory at Dettingen (1743), and emerged with glory from a defeat at Fontenoy † in the same year in which the young Pretender made his spectacular dash to Derby. She had captured Louisburg in Cape Breton Island, "the Gibraltar of the New World", but exchanged it at the peace for Madras, which had been taken from us by Dupleix,

\* For the new and more adventurous spirit in the navy the chief credit belongs to Anson, whose voyage of nearly four years round the world (1739-43) was a triumph and an inspiration. Vernon, Hawke and Boscawen are names almost equally great.

† George gave great offence by leading his troops wearing the yellow scarf of Hanover: the episode reminds us of the jealous suspicion roused by his Hanoverian sympathies and their effect on our foreign policy.



and for the abandonment of French claims to the Netherlands. It was a fact of significance for us that the two Bourbon powers, France and Spain, had again united (as in the Polish war), for, though France had again accepted the Hanoverian succession, it must have been becoming clear that the next war, when it came, would be largely fought beyond the ocean.

This war is, indeed, chiefly interesting if regarded as a rehearsal for the greater war which was so soon to follow. To us it seems obvious that America and India would be the prizes at stake, and that it was very fortunate for us that our chief antagonists, pre-occupied with military affairs, had been neglecting their navies. We cannot claim to have shown any great foresight ourselves, for the country as a whole was only slowly beginning to lay to heart the wise saying of the great Lord Halifax, "The first article of an Englishman's political creed must be that he Believeth in the Sea: without which it requireth no General Council to pronounce him incapable of salvation here below".

## CHAPTER XIX

### The Eighteenth Century to 1789 (*continued*)

#### *Russia after Peter the Great*

We may occupy the interval between the two wars, in which no striking events took place in Europe, by returning to the affairs of Russia, which had much to do with the diplomatic revolution which took place in that period. In the year after the death of Peter the Great an alliance was made with Austria (1726) which was renewed twenty years later. By that time Elizabeth, Peter's younger daughter, was on the throne (1741-62). This alarmed Frederic, who took what precaution he could by marrying her nephew and heir, Peter, to a German princess, later to be famous as Catherine II. But for the moment this availed him little: Elizabeth hated Frederic, and this formed a close bond between her and Maria Theresa, who had solid grounds for her detestation. Frederic's career was indeed dominated by these two royal ladies: \* the youth of the latter had tempted him to his first aggression: their common hostility nearly destroyed him: and the death of the former was his salvation in 1762.

#### *The French Alliance with Austria*

Maria Theresa, as we have seen, ended the last war with a hatred of Prussia, and a profound dissatisfaction with England: she looked round for a new ally in the West, and Kaunitz, her minister, by a bold reversal of policy, secured the alliance of France. As by that time we were practically at war with that country in both America and India, we were, by the logic of circumstance, forced to an alliance with Prussia in 1756.† We cannot but agree with the French historian (Martin), who calls France's alliance with Austria "an act of madness, of imbecile treason against herself". Austria could give her no help against England, and to join in a scheme for the destruction of Prussia for Austria's benefit was to weaken herself irretrievably in the more important struggle overseas. Again, she made a mistake in not making sure

\* He was also unfortunate enough to have offended Madame de Pompadour, Louis XVI's influential mistress.

† George II's fears for Hanover account for his willingness to agree to the alliance.

of the support of Spain, which might have been of real value to her. The Spanish king had a Portuguese wife, accustomed to think of England as an ally, and, partly through her influence, Spain did not enter the war till 1762, when it was too late.

It would be unjust to saddle Frederic with the whole responsibility for the first World War—for a war which decided the destiny of America and India surely deserves the name—but it is undeniable that his personality and the reactions to it largely determined its scope. By the irony of fate it created the British Empire, a result which he desired as little as we expected it.

### *The Seven Years War 1756-63*

It is at first sight startling to find England, the ally of Austria in the last war, fighting against her in this; but indeed the European situation was extremely confused. The only certain elements in it were Maria Theresa's determination to recover Silesia from Frederic, the mutual hostility of England and France, and (it might have been thought) the eternal hatred of Bourbon and Hapsburg. It was the sudden reversal of Austrian policy in seeking a French alliance which created the new situation: Maria Theresa was dissatisfied with the help we had given her, and, very sensibly, felt that she had more to fear from an alliance of France and Prussia than from one between Prussia and England. From her point of view there was much to be said for the change: the pill was gilded for the French court by Madame de Pompadour's detestation for Frederic, and by Louis's vague feeling that a Catholic alliance against Protestants might give some much-needed compensation for the irregularities of his private life. But the alliance was to cost the French dear.

In England the Duke of Newcastle clung as long as he could to our friendship with Austria, and pleased the king not only by that but by a system of indiscriminate payments to foreign powers intended to safeguard Hanover. It was not till Maria Theresa had rejected our somewhat tentative offers of help that George was driven into the uncongenial arms of Frederic,\* against whom he had quite recently been coquetting with Russia.

Pitt, who, though in office till 1755 when Newcastle dismissed him, had had no control over foreign policy, had long favoured

\* Our agreement with him (the Convention of Westminster) was signed in January 1756, three months before the Austro-French alliance, but it had for some time been clear in which direction Austrian policy was tending.

alliance with Prussia and had been contemptuous of our attempt to buy German support. His indifference to Hanoverian interests had alienated the king, who could not forgive him for having once said that "his formidable kingdom is considered only as a province to a despicable electorate". To Pitt, France was "the ancient enemy of these kingdoms", an enemy to be met by rousing the country to its danger, not by "waiting to see if the wind would blow us subsidiary troops" from Germany.

The ordinary opinion was that of Lord Hertford. "I don't think a little war will do us any harm", but the war began ill: however, the "negligence" of Byng, so savagely punished, while it lost us Minorca, brought about the fall of the Government, and Pitt was called to office.

Britannia, nodding, signified her choice,  
And hailed in him God and the people's voice.

He dismissed the German troops brought over to defend the country, raised the army to 50,000 men by a Militia Bill,\* soon followed by the formation of two regiments of Highlanders:† the tide had turned—but the results were not seen at first: in 1757 Pitt was still talking of our "disgraced, distressed country" and offering to surrender Gibraltar to Spain; but by 1759 "our bells were worn threadbare by ringing for victories". From the moment when he came into power, our affairs were directed by a genius who could not only think in terms of continents but could find and inspire men to make his dreams come true: not till then did the nation awake to the possibilities which lay before it. The first eighteen months of the war were, from our point of view, a disastrous failure: Pitt came, and in four years the world was at our feet.

There was a sense, no doubt, in which this result was inevitable; success in America and India must clearly fall to the nation which could establish and hold the command of the sea, and it is no mere paradox to maintain that Louis XIV lost both India and America to France when he concentrated on warfare by land and neglected his navy: but this conception had no more dawned on the

\* Mrs. Montagu, the famous "bluestocking", was "sorry to see every town in any way look like a garrison town, and the very roads look red with militia. It seemed to me as if the land had been sown with dragon's teeth and armed men had sprung from them".

† This generous and far-sighted act did much to restore the self-respect of Scotland, lessened by the harsh measures taken after Culloden, and helped forward that reconciliation of the Scots to the Union which was soon to bear such remarkable fruit.

blundering British statesmen who made the alliance with Frederic than it had been present to the prosaic and peaceful mind of Walpole. It takes a genius to make possibilities into facts.

In India the tide had turned before Pitt came into power, with the emergence of Clive—"that man not born for a desk, that heaven born general", as Pitt called him. The battle of Plassey (1757) gave us Bengal and an Indian base from which to support our efforts in the South. It was Dupleix who had been the first to see that the future of India lay in the hands either of the French or of the English, and his efforts, if they had been better supported from home, might well have decided the question in favour of France: but the French Company was too much under the authority of a home government which (like our own, till Pitt came) had no vision itself and distrusted the vision of its subordinates, whereas the wealthy English Company, regarded as a valuable financial asset, was left greater freedom. When Dupleix was recalled in 1754, the French cause was really lost: Clive inherited his policy, and superior British seamanship provided him with all the backing which he needed.\*

In America, the French started with a considerable advantage, for their colonists were a united body, amenable to instruction from home, while the British colonies, though far more numerous, were divergent in origin and in temperament, and found co-operation difficult either with one another or with English troops sent from home. Again, the French had a strong strategic position: if they could effect a junction, along the line of the great rivers, between their bases in Canada and their bases in the South, the British would be hemmed in between the Alleghanies and the sea. In the early stages of the war our efforts were half-hearted by sea and disastrous on land. Pitt's new naval policy was directed to the blockading of French ships in their own ports, which enabled us to send fleets of our own across the Atlantic, to assist operations by land and to attack French colonies by sea. This meant that Montcalm, the great French commander in Canada, could hope for no support from home, and made possible the capture of Quebec (1759) by Wolfe, an officer after Pitt's own heart, followed up by that of the whole province of Canada in the ensuing year.†

\* According to Clive, Pitt "gave India the preference to our concerns in America".

† Choiseul, the able French minister, concentrated 70,000 men to invade England in 1758, and so had not the resources with which to save Canada.

That same year (1759) saw the destruction of the Toulon fleet by Boscawen, and of the Brest fleet by Hawke at Quiberon Bay, a victory which in its glory and in the greatness of its results anticipates that of Trafalgar. After these two operations the French navy, which had numbered thirty-five sail of the line, was reduced to nineteen ships, many of them damaged and all blockaded in their home harbours: the sea became definitely a British highway.

By land, our operations had been of smaller scope, though it was only our continual subsidies and the presence of our armies on the Continent (ably commanded by Ferdinand of Brunswick) which enabled Frederic to maintain himself: one great engagement at Minden (1759) covered our troops with glory and saved Hanover: it might have been a crushing blow to France had not Lord George Sackville (later, as Lord George Germaine, to contribute his share to disaster in America) repeatedly refused to obey the order to the cavalry to charge.

Frederic, throughout the war, was really on the defensive, but it was a position which he refused to accept. Like Pitt, he believed the true defence to be attack, and, just as the British navy (after the lamentable affair of Admiral Byng) never refused to engage superior forces, so Frederic met superior Russian and Austrian armies with continual and daring attack. Great general as he was, he was often beaten, and at one time, after the battle of Kunersdorf (1759), contemplated suicide, but rallied when his enemies failed to follow up their victory. Later, when things again looked black in 1762, he was saved by the death of the Tsarina Elizabeth, his implacable foe, and a change in Russian policy.

But the end of the war was unworthy of its course. In 1761, Pitt became aware that, by a second Family Compact, Spain proposed to come to the assistance of France: he wished to anticipate her action by declaring war, and when this policy was rejected, resigned at once. Bute, his successor (who, incidentally, had almost at once to declare war on Spain) was only anxious to conclude a peace, but the tide of success swept on in spite of him, and we captured both Havana and Manilla.

In 1763 Bute had his way, even offering to Austria to abandon Frederic. Though his haste to make peace lost us the Philippines (the conquest of which was unknown at the date of the peace treaty), even he could not prevent our gains from being enormous: by the Peace of Paris the French relinquished Canada, abandoned

their claims in the valley of the Ohio, and agreed not to fortify Pondicherry in India: Spain ceded Florida in return for Havana, receiving Louisiana from France in compensation: we recovered Minorca by exchange.

Frederic made a separate peace at the same time, retaining Silesia, which, so far as he was concerned, was the chief bone of contention: he also retained a permanent and very natural grievance against this country, which left us without a friend on the Continent, and was handed down, unforbidden, to Bismarck, whom it led to the conclusion that "the English constitution does not admit of alliances of assured permanence".

### *The American Revolution*

It is seldom that three great events are so closely and so clearly connected as the Seven Years War, the revolt of the American colonies, and the French Revolution. To put the course of events as bluntly as possible, our success in the war had freed the colonists from the fear of France, and therefore made them less dependent on our help: when we suggested that they should pay something towards the cost of their own defence, we presented that reasonable but unwelcome suggestion with such incredible lack of tact that what should have been the friendly settlement of an obvious obligation was capable of being turned into a major constitutional grievance. The cry, "No taxation without representation" was used to justify an attitude which had in many quarters a less noble origin, and it was a principle which it was difficult for us to challenge in argument: we decided to meet it by force, and so undertook the colossal enterprise of subduing a vast and distant domain which we had done our best to unite against us.

But for the genius of George Washington the attempt might have succeeded, and even in spite of him the colonies might have been forced back into an unwilling subjection, had not the French and Spanish seized their opportunity for revenge. Through their action we lost the command of the sea for a time, and with it the American colonies.

But revenge on the national scale is an expensive luxury, and French finances were ruined by her natural but illogical support of the oppressed subjects of British despotism. Many causes united to bring about the French Revolution, but the national bankruptcy which the war involved, combined with the extremely

liberal doctrines which they had been fighting to maintain in America, provided the occasion for the momentous meeting of the States-General in 1789.

For European history, the details of the American war are less important than its effects on England. As for its origin, it is enough to say that our original proposals were in themselves not unreasonable: it was only when the colonists rejected them, and suggested no alternative, that the Stamp Act was passed in 1765. That again was withdrawn by the Rockingham ministry, and a compromise might ultimately have been reached but for the folly of Townshend who, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, in the ministry nominally led by Chatham, imposed new duties on tea, glass and paper imported into America.

These, once more, were withdrawn by Lord North (appearing for a moment as Saul among the political prophets), but with incredible folly the tea duty was retained as an "assertion of principle". The "Boston Tea-party" followed in 1773, and troops were inevitably sent to deal with what was a clear act of rebellion. This drove the colonies into union, and though after the battle of Lexington (1775) very genuine efforts at conciliation were made, too much blood had been shed, and the Declaration of Independence was published on July 4th, 1776.

In the ensuing war we missed the opportunities which the first three years gave, and failed to take advantage of the unpreparedness of the colonists: the surrender of Burgoyne at Saratoga (1777), due to Germaine's ambition to conduct the war from Whitehall, was a decisive fact, for it encouraged our European enemies to join the war against us—France in 1778, Spain a year later.\* Nor was this the end, for, as usual, neutrals resented the actions of the power which held the sea, and by 1780 we were at war with Holland (whose financial support was invaluable to Washington) and relations with Russia, Denmark and Sweden were severely strained: "the shot fired at Concord Bridge", says an American historian, "had been heard round the world".

The end, inevitable when once the command of the sea was lost, came in 1781, when Cornwallis, blockaded both by sea and land, surrendered at Yorktown: Minorca was lost to the French: Gibraltar was only saved by the gallantry of Lord Heathfield, the Governor; and only the great victory of Rodney over the French

\* "It is to Germaine, if to any one man, that the disaster of Yorktown as of Saratoga is to be ascribed" (*Fortescue*, IV, 203).



fleet off Dominica (the Battle of the Saints, April 1782) enabled us to make peace without complete dishonour. We had to recognise the independence of the United States, to surrender Minorca and Florida to Spain, and to France several islands and settlements in Africa and India.

We had lost our American empire, though Canada remained to us, but it has been truly said that George Washington saved the British Constitution. In days when Fox could appear in Parliament wearing the uniform of one of Washington's officers; when Lord North could complain that it was inconvenient to have to dine at houses where the portrait of the American general was prominently displayed; when Burke and Chatham had no doubt of the essential justice of the colonists' cause; it was clear that a new spirit of independence was abroad in the land. Nor could those impervious to sentiment fail to perceive the fundamental absurdity of admitting the justice of the American demand that those unrepresented should not be taxed, at a moment when representation was denied to great and growing cities like Birmingham and Liverpool. We may, and must, regret the circumstances in which the United States departed from us, but their departure was the providential agent in the development of a truly constitutional government in the country they had so successfully defied. Chatham was hardly too severe when he told the ministers in 1775 that "the whole of their political conduct had been one continual series of weakness, temerity, despotism, ignorance, futility, negligence, and the most notorious servility, incapacity and corruption". The American War showed the result of employing "pliable men, not capable men" to govern the country, and is a landmark in the history of our government.

### *The "Benevolent Despots"\**

The last years of the eighteenth century have been described as the age of the Benevolent Despots, Frederic, Catherine of Russia and Joseph II: if the title seems at first sight to contradict what has been said of the century as a whole, it should be remembered that, except in Joseph's case, their benevolence came from the head rather than the heart, and that the spirit of the eighteenth century was too strong to allow his benevolence to take effect. We must briefly consider their inspiration, their achievements and

\* In this and in the following section I have owed much to J. M. Thompson, *Lectures on Foreign History* (Blackwell).

their foreign policy, in which last the benevolence was demonstrably non-existent.

Their inspiration came in the main from the critical spirit which manifested itself in France. Rousseau's doctrines, whether they were inspired philosophy or, as has been said, "Nonsense on stilts", had profound influence. Montesquieu, though he did not really understand the British Constitution, had extolled its liberalism: Voltaire, the correspondent both of Frederic and of Catherine, had thought no institution too sacred for criticism: and—perhaps more important than either—the Encyclopaedists had impartially denounced the tyranny of the Church, Arbitrary Government and Protection: the benevolent despots read and pondered, and Catherine maintained a correspondence with Diderot. Reforms, they thought, were clearly necessary, but they must be reforms imposed from above.

Frederic's chief claim to "benevolence", as distinguished from the ability and courage which are undeniable, lay in his scheme for compulsory education and his judicial reforms: religious toleration was easy for a sceptic, and to abolish torture in the law courts a clear matter of common sense: his despotism led to a drastic organisation of ordinary life which secured an efficiency, destined to end with him, at the heavy price of a moral decline, and a weakening of the nation's power to think for itself.

Catherine, after deposing her incompetent husband, Peter, reigned as Empress for thirty-four years (1762–96). Like Peter the Great, on whom she modelled herself, she aimed at bringing Western enlightenment to Russia, and set before herself the objects of codifying the law, reforming the system of justice and emancipating the serfs: but the pressure of the landlords defeated the last of these schemes, and "the vast apathy of Russia" hampered the others, so that her actual achievements fell far short of her intentions. But her reforming energy was unlimited, and she was sincere in her belief that "the nation is not made for the sovereign but the sovereign for the nation". \*

The Emperor Joseph II, that rare phenomenon a reforming Hapsburg, had to contend with the disapproval of his forceful mother, Maria Theresa, the hostility of the Church, and the fundamental conservatism of his subjects. His love for his country

\* Her courage in insisting on being herself inoculated for smallpox, as an example to her people, deserves honourable record.

was as undeniable as his care for the well-being of the monarchy, but he was too ready "to lay down the law", and this quality, objectionable in a private citizen, is dangerous for an emperor. His abolition of serfdom was a failure: his attempt to make German the official language infuriated Magyars, Italians and Croats, and his edict of religious toleration alarmed not only the Pope but the strong Catholicism of Austria and the Netherlands. In another country his eminently sensible desire for a uniform administration might have succeeded, but the Empire, that motley collection of races, presented a problem which might well have baffled a more judicious political reformer. He failed because, as was said by Frederic (whom he greatly admired), he always tended to take the second step before the first, or, as another critic has remarked, because he reversed the old maxim *suaviter in modo, fortiter in re*, and, while consistently generous in his ideas, was consistently harsh in their application.

In the foreign policy of the benevolent despots the eighteenth-century spirit is manifest throughout. The Partition of Poland (1772) shows them at their worst, and Turkey and Sweden were only saved from similar treatment by the greater attractions of a nearer prize, and by the exertions of a Swedish king.\*

When the King of Poland died, in 1763, Russia and Prussia agreed on his successor, a Polish nobleman personally acceptable to Catherine: the patriotic party, as usual, played into the hands of its enemies by opposing any internal reform, and in particular religious toleration, and, though France stirred up Turkey to assist them by attacking Russia, they and their curious allies were easily defeated.

Catherine, who would no doubt have liked to annex all Poland, was prepared to propitiate Prussia and Austria with a Partition, and, in 1772, West Prussia (but not Danzig), was allotted to Frederic, much of Lithuania to Catherine, and Galicia to Joseph. The pretence of "benevolence" was maintained by a declaration that the purpose was "to secure Poland from total dissolution": Maria Theresa alone protested that the arrangement

\* Gustavus III, himself a notable benevolent despot of the second order, carried out a *coup d'état* in 1772 and made great internal reforms, followed by another in 1779, which completely destroyed the power of the nobility; he secured a law saying that "the King can administer the affairs of the State as seems good to him". He carried on a not unsuccessful war with Catherine, and when this ended in 1790 was full of generous sympathy with Marie Antoinette. His plans to rescue the French royal family came to an end when he was murdered at a masked ball in 1792, and Sweden remained neutral in the French war till his son Gustavus came of age.

was dishonourable, but, in the end, in Frederic's cynical phrase, "she wept and took".

It will be convenient to summarise here the lamentable story of eighteenth-century Poland. In 1791 the more enlightened of the upper classes among the Poles secured a new and sensible constitution abolishing the *liberum veto* and the elective nature of the monarchy: Russia and Prussia, resenting any strengthening of the kingdom, took advantage of the preoccupation of Europe with the French Revolution to attack Poland and divide the spoils by a second Partition (1793) which gave Russia a larger piece of what had once been Lithuania, and Prussia Danzig and more land to the south of her earlier gains. The Polish revolution had failed because it was not, as in France, a genuinely "popular" movement, for "the people", as such, had very little voice in affairs.

But in 1794, under Kosciusko, there was a really popular rising, especially in the lands taken over by Prussia. This time Austria shared in the suppression and the spoils: Poland was wiped off the map. As a result of the three Partitions, Russia, Austria and Prussia acquired respectively six, four and two and a half million Polish subjects.

Some general reflections may be permitted. Russia, which was the prime mover in the Partitions and the chief beneficiary, has this much excuse that her gains were all from Lithuania, which in the days of its greatness had undoubtedly expanded at Russian expense. The most ancient Polish land—Great Poland which they had held for a thousand years—Little Poland, with Cracow as its capital, won in the eleventh century—the Baltic coast lands, conquered from the Teutonic knights in 1410—all these fell to the share of Austria and Prussia.

As for Turkey, Catherine took advantage of her success in the Turco-Polish war to make a treaty in 1774 by which she gained Azof and freedom of navigation in the Black Sea, and, what was equally important, some right of intervention on behalf of the Christian subjects of the Turk. She and Joseph prepared a scheme for the partition of the Turkish Empire, which the French Revolution was to interrupt.

Joseph had other schemes also, of which the most notable was an exchange of the Netherlands for Bavaria (where the senior line of the Wittelsbachs had died out): this would have been a clear advantage to Austria, but Frederic, France and England agreed in objecting to it, and the plan was dropped. The Netherlands, a

distant and refractory possession, had long been a difficulty to Austria: the conservatives there objected so strongly to Joseph's attempts to enforce uniformity that we shall find them absurdly ready to welcome as allies the radicals of France.

Joseph was by far the most attractive and the most sincere of the benevolent despots: he chose for himself the inscription "Here rests a prince whose intentions were pure, but who had the misfortune to see all his plans miscarry"; but the people of Vienna, with a truer instinct, chose to record on his statue that he *saluti publicae vixit non diu sed totus*. He died in 1790, too soon to foresee the storm which was to hurl his sister and her husband from the throne of France.

### England

It is sometimes said that the political history of England in the eighteenth century covers the whole development of party government. William III had dreamt of a non-party ministry, which, as we have seen, helps to account for his failure to arouse enthusiasm. The Whigs, who had made the Revolution Settlement, carried on under Anne the war which William had begun, and, thanks to Godolphin at home and Marlborough abroad, did so with glory, being wise enough, incidentally, to maintain good relations with the City.

They showed less wisdom in their failure to make peace in 1709, and the nation's weariness of war and its easily roused suspicions of a great and powerful soldier, combined with Anne's personal preference, brought in the Tories. Thanks to Bolingbroke, they made a successful peace in 1713, but it was Bolingbroke also whom they had to thank for the long exclusion from office which followed Anne's death. The Tories were fatally weakened by the suspicion that they, like their leader, hankered after a Jacobite restoration, and it was only natural that when George I came from Hanover he should rely on Whig support.

It is at this moment, from one point of view, that we should place the beginning of *party government*, for though it has been convenient, and substantially accurate, to speak of Whig and Tory governments in the preceding reigns, the lines were not yet sharply drawn: Tories had joined in the invitation to William, and took the lead in proposing the Act of Settlement. "The 'glorious Revolution' was mainly the work of Tory hands and Whig brains" (Oliver, *op. cit.*, I, 123).

Throughout Anne's reign the political situation was bewildering, turning as it did on the varying moods of the queen and her favourite ladies, and her dread of "falling into the hands of either party": Harley, the Tory leader, was a "moderate", and, as such, suspect to the "diehards" of his party: Marlborough, caring only for the war, could speak of "the detested names of Whig and Tory": Godolphin and Shrewsbury both sat loose to party ties, and would have echoed Sunderland's famous question: "what matter who saarves his Majesty, so long as his Majesty is saarved?" They might even have agreed with Halifax, who was proud to call himself a Trimmer, that "Ignorance maketh most Men go into a Party, and Shame keepeth them from getting out of it".

It can indeed be maintained that it was "a Coalition Government which won Blenheim, Ramillies, Gibraltar and the Act of Union", and that title can even be claimed for Harley's government of 1710 (Feiling, *op. cit.*); but in it the "diehard" element came to predominate under the influence of St. John (Bolingbroke), and the Schism Act of 1714 showed a disgraceful revival of intolerance; but it was repealed when, under George I, the Whigs came in and a more real party government began.

There followed half a century of Whig domination, which had the great merit of refusing to persecute dissenters and so giving the country a unity which their rivals could never have given. In this moderating process the influence of Walpole—a very typical eighteenth-century figure ("a first-rate statesman with a first-rate business sense" (Oliver, I, 15)) (1721-42)—was as valuable in securing tolerance as in the peaceful foreign policy which greatly increased the national wealth. During much of this period the unwillingness or inability of the kings to speak English greatly increased the power of the "Prime Minister", as he began to be called by those who did not like him. The final failure of Jacobite attempts in 1745 removed a millstone from the neck of the Tory party, and they became once more qualified for the service of the Crown.

The fall of Walpole in 1742 led in 1744 to the era of Pelham, whose "Broad bottom" administration of ten years (which included Pitt after 1746) deserves more credit than it usually receives, and at his death in 1754 to that of his brother, the Duke of Newcastle, who possessed all Walpole's defects (such as his reliance on borough mongering and corruption) and none of his political

ability.\* It is really absurd to speak of party government in a day when (as in 1754) there were only forty-two contested elections. Personal interest, not party principles, gave the government such cohesion as it had: the parties contended "for office not for doctrine". For this state of affairs Walpole must bear some of the responsibility, for though he by no means invented corrupt methods of government, and though none of his opponents would for a moment have hesitated to employ them, he undoubtedly lowered the national tone, for his talk was more cynical than his conduct.†

As we have seen, Pitt had to be called in to save the situation, at a moment when, in his own words, Newcastle was "like a child driving a governess cart on a precipice": the result we have already seen. But Pitt, though, as the Duke of Cumberland said, he was "what is scarce—a man", was not a good party man: his inestimable service was to rouse the country as a whole to a belief in itself—"the Great Commoner's glory is not to have won an Empire but to have united a people". (Basil Williams, *Pitt*, preface.)

But the people had still to wait before its views could be officially heard in Parliament, though even now it somehow managed to make them known, as Walpole found to his cost. The young king who had succeeded in 1760, was imbued with Bolingbroke's doctrine that a "Patriot King" should be above party, or rather should unite both parties in his service. In practice this meant the dismissal of Pitt and the attempt, through Bute and the elder Fox, to control Parliament by the methods of Walpole and Newcastle. After a brief success, this broke down, and was followed, after a period of chaos, by a second and more successful attempt with the assistance of the genial Lord North. His coalition with the younger

\* It should be recorded to the credit of the family's personal honesty that Pelham in 1730 had refused to make profit out of his office of Paymaster, as Pitt did, with more publicity, sixteen years later; and that Newcastle left political life £400,000 poorer than he entered it.

† In Walpole's long administration (1721-41) there are two moments of great importance for English constitutional history. The first came in 1721 when, by refusing to go to the House of Lords, he first suggested the principle that the chief function of a "Prime Minister" was to represent the wishes of the Crown to the Commons and the wishes of the Commons to the Crown. Hitherto all the highest political posts had almost invariably been held by peers: from 1721 we may date the gradual growth of the sentiment (from which Lord Chatham was to suffer in the 18th century and Lord Curzon in the 20th) that a peerage is rather a disqualification for the highest office. The second came in 1723 when by deciding to "meddle" with his brother-in-law's conduct of foreign affairs (changing the name of the firm from "Townshend & Walpole" to "Walpole & Townshend") he enlarged and greatly strengthened the position of the chief minister, whatever office he might hold.

Fox, which this came to involve, so shocked the public conscience that it combined with the American disaster to cause the demand for a change, and the French Revolution soon came to provide an intelligible and honourable basis on which parties could be formed. This, it may well be held, was the moment at which party government, as we know it, came into existence.\* Though William Pitt, who became Prime Minister in 1783, at the age of twenty-four, did so to serve the king, he was in an independent position, for there was no acceptable alternative. For ten years he governed the country, greatly improved its finances, and would have reformed Parliament if Parliament would have consented to be reformed: much more might have been accomplished had not war proved unavoidable in 1793. Though the king's influence remained strong—as we know, it was his refusal to grant Catholic emancipation which caused Pitt's temporary withdrawal in 1801 †—there was never again any danger that royal power would be a decisive factor in English politics, or that to be a "King's Friend" would be a passport to office.

With Pitt's career as a War Minister (1793–1801) we deal elsewhere (see p. 321): he was neither a strategic genius nor a good chooser of men, and our army was ill-directed and ill-provided, but his indomitable courage rendered as great a service to our foreign policy as his complete personal honesty had done to our domestic politics. Like his father, he was the only man who could have saved the country, and he saved it at the cost of his fortune, his domestic happiness, and his life.

In this account of the party system we have had no opportunity to mention the great achievement of the Act of Union with Scotland (1707) which Whigs and moderate Tories united to promote, whereby England gained political security, and Scotland a greatly increased prosperity. But for a time the Union was very unpopular in Scotland, and real prosperity did not begin till the failure of the "Forty Five" showed the Stuart cause to be hopeless, and removed one cause of dissension between the Highlands and the Lowlands. It led also to the abolition of "heritable jurisdictions" whereby the landowner, especially in the Highlands, had been able to maintain armed bodies of retainers bound to him

\* There are some to whom the career of Charles James Fox, beginning in complete and violent irresponsibility and passing into an equally violent aversion of great principles, seems to mark the close of one epoch and the beginning of another.

† It should be remembered that on this question both Parliament and people agreed with the king.



by a feudal tie. When the elder Pitt had the inspiration of raising purely Highland regiments he did a great service to the cause of union, and from the middle of the century rapid progress began. In Ireland the record of English rule was, for most of the century, one of the most shameful pages in our history: "all that was bad in Cromwell's Irish system was preserved and all that was good reversed" (Trevelyan, p. 485): our administration (when we took the trouble to administer at all) was a selfish compound of religious bigotry and economic error, for which no blame can be too severe. Nevertheless, in its later years there seemed some hope of better things: broad-minded statesmen like Grattan were beginning to reconcile races and creeds; while in England Pitt and Dundas, who were both proud to call themselves "scholars" of Adam Smith, were anxious to remove the restrictions hampering Irish trade, and to dispel the belief that England and Scotland would lose by Ireland's prosperity: but the French Revolution came to re-awaken wild hopes in Ireland and party spirit in England, and so to make a reasonable settlement impossible. The Tories had taken over the old Whig No Popery slogan: the "United Irishmen" threw themselves into the arms of France: and anyone who has ever heard the famous song "Who dares to speak of '98?" will realise how deep the tragic gulf became.

For the rest, the eighteenth century was the century of the great squirearchy, whether titled or not. It is not from great squires that striking changes are to be expected, except in farming, where Coke of Norfolk, that most progressive of patriarchs, was a famous pioneer, and the clergy of the period did little to inspire either them, or indeed any of their hearers, with a zeal for new ideas. Their leaders based religion on common sense, and did valuable work in demonstrating that it was by no means "unreasonable", but Bishop Butler, the greatest of them, was conspicuous for his repugnance to "enthusiasm". For that, the country had to go to the Methodists, and the work of John Wesley and his followers had much to do with proving to the English people that it was possible to be as "enthusiastic" about religion as about the Rights of Man. But for them, the doctrines of the French Revolution would have found a readier hearing in England.

But the eighteenth century in England is as a whole the age of dignity, proportion and good sense, as is shown in the reasoned

beauty of its houses, its gardens and its furniture.\* A genuine English school of painting arose, and the Royal Academy, founded in 1768, had Sir Joshua Reynolds as its first President.† In the field of literature, it opens with the Augustan Age of Anne, in which, under French influence, our poets preferred the craftsmanship of the heroic couplet to the flights of inspiration, till its very perfection, in the hands of great exponents like Pope, at last

Made poetry a dull mechanic art,  
And every warbler had his tune by heart.

Eighteenth-century prose, after its simple and natural beginning in the *Spectator* and the *Tatler*, developed into the stately periods of Johnson and Gibbon and the tremendous rhetoric of Burke. Its poetry had a different fate: it was finding its way back to nature and simplicity when, towards its end, Blake burst on the scene. Eighteenth-century poets, it has been said, appeal for divine fire in accents so decorous that no one dreams of looking for the extinguisher; but the fire which blazed in Blake was unmistakably real: it was not to be long before Burns, Shelley, Keats, Coleridge and Wordsworth were to prove that a nation of shopkeepers, crowned with the favours of Neptune and of Mars, was also the chosen haunt of the Muses.

\* It was the golden age of furniture in England and the great names of Chippendale, Hepplewhite and Sheraton have been allowed to usurp a credit which should be shared with a multitude of native craftsmen.

† The British Museum was founded in 1753, owing much to the generosity of Sir Hans Sloane and the foresight of Pelham, then Prime Minister.

## CHAPTER XX

### The French Revolution

#### *Predisposing Causes*

Any attempt, however cursory, to "explain" the French Revolution has to face two questions: first, Why did the Revolution break out in *France*? and second, Why did it break out at this particular moment? Of these the former is clearly the more important.

The condition of the poor in France was by no means worse than that of the peasants throughout Europe. In Germany, Poland, Hungary and Russia, on the estates of the Prussian nobility in Brandenburg or Silesia, serfdom in its most oppressive form still existed: the agricultural labourer in England was in a pitiable condition, and he was soon to be joined in his misery by victims of the industrial revolution whose rights as human beings were equally disregarded.

The French government was not exceptionally oppressive: France suffered less than most European countries from the heavy pressure of the Old Régime; she had, in Louis XVI, a king far more respectable than any she had long known, whose accession (like that of Charles I—a sinister parallel) had been hailed with enthusiasm, and who might be expected to tread, with more sympathy and discretion, the path of reform which the benevolent despots were treading elsewhere.

The acute division between the *noblesse* and the people was far from being peculiar to France: indeed, England was the only country where, by a dispensation for which we cannot be too thankful, the sons of the peerage were merged, in a generation or two, in the ranks of commoners: nor was the immunity of the nobles from taxation, scandalous as it was, a grievance peculiar to France.

It would appear, therefore, that we must look to the French national character for our explanation, and it is not far to seek. The French are a logical people, prepared to take action on principles to which the English are content to pay lip service. The eighteenth century had enunciated many such principles, and French writers, like Rousseau, had concentrated attention on man

as a social animal (which involved a discussion of the problems of government), rather than on his capacity for self-improvement—a topic which had more interest for German writers of the time: it should be added that they were almost entirely without any practical political experience. The air was full of explosive ideas, though they had more influence after the Revolution had begun than in its actual inception.

Again, we have seen in French history a readiness to act, and to act with violence, in defence of ideas: the French wars of religion had been very bloody affairs, and the wars of the Fronde suggest a certain preference for violent action for its own sake. Paris, which spoke for France with a clearness denied to other capital cities, was particularly ready to translate opinion into action, and was once more to play a decisive part, as it had done in the religious wars: unlike the influence of London, which was equally great, that of Paris was liable to make itself suddenly and dramatically felt. France was the most advanced country in Europe: in Meredith's phrase, "She snatched at heaven's flames and kindled nations".

The reason why the Revolution broke out when it did may be found, by an apparent paradox, in the prosperity of the country at the moment. The middle classes were prospering under the doctrine of *laissez faire*: in foreign policy some decided successes had been won, a rebuff inflicted on the Emperor Joseph and a humiliation on England. The philosophic Liberals believed themselves to be entering on an Age of Gold. It would seem, in contradiction to the general opinion, that it is in times of comparative prosperity that men realise most clearly the need for further progress.\*

And—here we pass to another characteristic of the French mind—it was a government which really ruled that the national instinct demanded: a government which was both arbitrary and ineffective offended both their principles and their prejudices, and it was in the sphere of finance that these qualities were now most clearly shown.

Louis made effort after effort to deal with the financial situation, which was clearly acute, calling in first a philosopher, Turgot, then a banker, Necker, then a courtier, Calonne, then an archi-

\* It is significant that it was in Brittany and La Vendée, where the Old Régime was most oppressive, that the people were most bitter in their resentment of revolution, and in Paris and Marseilles, where reform had made most progress, that revolution found strongest support. (Thompson, *The French Revolution*, p. 424.)

bishop, de Brienne, and finally Necker once more. All of these were successively dismissed in disgrace, and the American war, glorious as it was for France, plunged the nation deeper into bankruptcy. The ineffectiveness of the government was obvious, as was also the unreadiness of the privileged classes, the nobility and the clergy, to bear their fair share of the national burden, whereas the poor man had to pay more than half his income in direct taxation, besides heavy indirect taxation on salt.

In times of crisis the ultimate remedy had always been the summoning of the States-General, and in 1789 Louis called together this body, which had not met since 1614. It was limited in power to making suggestions (as it had done to Marie dei Medici at its last meeting and to Catherine in 1560), and it was fatally weakened by its division into three Orders, Clergy, Nobility and Commons, which enabled the Crown to disregard its suggestions with impunity.

The two privileged Orders, representing some 600,000 people, could always outvote the third, which represented some 24,000,000, and the *tiers état* was in no mood for a repetition of the fiasco of 1614. It was now represented by a well-educated middle class, very ready to state its own grievances, and not entirely blind to those which it did not personally feel. The success of the American Revolution had taught them that such phrases as "the sovereignty of the people" were capable of being translated into action, and when they insisted that voting should be *par tête* (which gave them a majority) and not *par ordre*, and on June 17th declared themselves to be the National Assembly, the French Revolution had begun.

### *The Domestic History of France 1789-99*

The course of the Revolution must be considered from two points of view—its effects on France itself and its effects on Europe as a whole. From the purely French point of view, its first ten years may be held by the fanciful to exhibit the national passion for symmetry: starting with an absolute monarchy in 1789 it arrives in five years at its revolutionary zenith with the Reign of Terror and the practical dictatorship of Robespierre, and in five years more it returns, by the *coup d'état* of Brumaire, to the scarcely disguised monarchy of the Consulate in 1799. To put it in another way, France passed through the stages of a Constitutional State, a bourgeois republic and a radical tyranny; and then, through the

similar stages of the Government of the Convention and the Directory, to the Consulate and an autocratic Empire.

Its early stages deserve more attention, and more credit, than they commonly receive. The States-General of 1789, which transformed itself into the Constituent Assembly, did in fact represent, and to a large extent fulfil, the hopes and wishes of the nation. To have issued the Declaration of Rights, to have abolished feudalism, and to have established a limited monarchy was well worth the comparatively slight bloodshed which had taken place before the king was brought to Paris in October. Paris had already had a great influence on events, and it was now to be seen what it would make of the greater power in its hands.

For two years the deputies, most of whom were respectable middle-class citizens, by no means devoid of legal training, grappled conscientiously and not unsuccessfully with their gigantic task of giving France a New Order. If Burke, whose "Reflections" were published in 1790, saw the dangers to come, there was every excuse for the enthusiasm of those who, like Wordsworth and Fox, welcomed their performance, and for those who, like Pitt, believed that "France and England had the same principles, not to aggrandise themselves, and to oppose aggrandisement in others".

The deputies made great mistakes, and, as was not surprising, some of the most serious were made in dealing with the thorny problems of religion and finance. Their religious settlement was rejected by at least half the clergy, and as their chief financial expedient was the confiscation of Church property (which was unquestionably enormous), it is not to be wondered at that the clergy encouraged disaffection. But perhaps their most serious blunder was the passing of a self-denying ordinance in 1791 forbidding deputies to sit in the new Legislative Assembly which, when it met in October, was therefore deprived of the benefit of their experience: a similar and equally grave mistake was made by forbidding deputies to hold executive posts.

But, with all their errors, they had made an indelible impression upon France. They had secured freedom and equality before the law for every citizen, they had redistributed the land so that far more Frenchmen had a tangible stake in its prosperity: they had abolished serfdom, and given women every right except the vote. A strong and not over-scrupulous king might have set himself to work the Constitution, and in course of time regained considerable power; but Louis XVI was not a Henri IV, and his conscience

was genuinely shocked by the treatment accorded to the Church. When all is said, the deputies of 1789 deserve honourable remembrance, for "their offspring was the liberal-thinking and liberal-living France of 1875" (Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 227). If their constitution was not, as Fox called it, "the most stupendous and glorious edifice of liberty ever erected on the foundation of human integrity", they as little deserved the taunts of Burke at "a government of 500 country attorneys and obscure curates" who had produced "an irrational, unprincipled, proscribing, ferocious, bloody and tyrannical democracy"—"a nameless, wild, enthusiastic thing".

Before the Legislative Assembly met, the attempted flight to Varennes in June 1791, had entirely altered the position\*: it made the Constitution unworkable, for it showed that the public declaration which Louis had made to foreign courts (that he was a free agent and had accepted the Constitution willingly) was completely dishonest: it is painful to speak harshly of a king and queen who were to meet so horrible a fate, but it must be said that no two persons could have been worse equipped to deal with such a crisis: it is doubtful whether the irresolution and dishonesty of Louis, or Marie Antoinette's implacable hostility to the Revolution and all its works, did more to promote catastrophe.

The flight and its failure changed the whole situation at home and abroad, and the new Assembly met in October 1791, in circumstances of great difficulty: it refused to depose the king, and the refusal led to bloodshed, for republicanism was beginning to be popular in Paris: on the other hand, it was impossible to work with a king clearly in opposition. Again, while the Constitution itself did not go far enough to satisfy democratic desires (for it disqualified one Frenchman out of every three from voting),† it went quite far enough to outrage royalist and religious sentiment. It was this latter fact which saved the situation, by forcing its supporters to unite, and war with Austria won support for the Government in 1792.

But this war, and Brunswick's arrogant manifesto, threatening Paris with destruction, sounded the death-knell of the monarchy, which was abolished in August 1792, the king's execution follow-

\* No one can read without emotion the story of the flight and of those many trivial events (a recent historian enumerates no less than fifteen) any one of which, had it taken another turn, would have brought the fugitives to safety.

† Our Reform Bill of 1832 only enfranchised 32 per cent. of the people; in 1789 only four Englishmen in one hundred had the vote. (Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 124.)

ing in January 1793. But the Constitution had died in August, and a Convention met at once to frame a successor. The more democratic scheme which it framed never came into force: the Convention itself was split into factions which contended ferociously for power; the more extreme party triumphed, and in a year power was in the hands of a Committee of Public Safety (April 1793), which culminated in the dictatorship of Robespierre. The triumphant Jacobins represent the first experiment in "totalitarianism" by a disciplined and exclusive party. During all this period extreme savagery marked the struggle: the September massacres (of priests and others imprisoned in Paris) had taken place before the Convention met, but from June 1793, when the Girondins (the more moderate party) fell,\* to the fall of Robespierre himself in July 1794, the guillotine was seldom idle.

The savagery and the tyranny may be explained, though they cannot be justified (especially in a people professing Liberty and Fraternity) by the greatness of the emergency which had to be met. There was war on three fronts—against a foreign enemy in the East, against a Catholic-Royalist enemy in the West, and in the South against a federalist party which denied that France was "one and indivisible". The two domestic foes were crushed with that competent ferocity of which only a compact party is capable, and some success was secured against the foreigners.

But Paris was tired of bloodshed, and Robespierre's successors, though no more humane and far less honest than he, were compelled by popular opinion to simulate moderation and to make yet another attempt to frame a constitution: it took the form in 1795 of a Parliament with two Chambers (two-thirds of its members drawn from the Old Convention) acting through five Directors, one of whom was to retire every year. This system lasted, with an efficiency varying with the very variable honesty of the Directors, till September 1797, when the Assembly showed signs of independence and the Directors, encouraged by Bonaparte, effected a *coup d'état* which put an end to all constitutional government. Two years later, in 1799, it was comparatively easy for Bonaparte, returning from Egypt at a moment when the Directors were unpopular at home and unsuccessful abroad, to overthrow them with the connivance of two of their number, by the *coup d'état* of Brumaire, and to establish himself as "First Consul" with

\* Twenty-one of them were executed in half an hour in October (Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 394).



practically autocratic power. The use which he made of it, so far as concerns the internal history of France, will be considered later.

### *The Neighbours of France 1789*

Before we consider the wars of the Revolution, it will be wise to look at the condition of the neighbouring states, which goes far to explain French success. We should begin by reminding ourselves that neither Germany nor Italy existed in any coherent form, and that Spain, though its royal family was united by blood with the Bourbons, was both morally and physically incapable of any unselfish effort.

On her whole Eastern frontier France nowhere touched a strong and united people: the Austrian Netherlands (Belgium) had, as we have seen, been very recently in revolt against the Hapsburgs: the Principalities and States along the Rhine were small and feeble: Switzerland had internal difficulties of her own: Savoy, part of the Kingdom of Sardinia, was French by traditional sympathy.

The most obvious and most dangerous enemy was Austria, whose sovereign, Leopold, was bound as emperor to defend the small states of his Empire and, as Marie Antoinette's brother, to give some support to her cause. (His death, in 1792, and the succession of his weak son was a great loss to Europe and a proportionate gain to France.)\* Normally the Hapsburgs thought more of maintaining, and possibly increasing, their family possessions than of their imperial duties. They were not likely to be ardent in defending small German princes, and (as we have already seen) were by no means averse from exchanging the Netherlands for some more accessible territory: they had always been tempted to think in terms of Italy as much as of Germany.

If the emperor could not, or would not, defend them, it was certain that the petty princes, whether ecclesiastical or temporal, could not defend themselves. The Diet of the Empire rather resembled a Heralds College than a war ministry: in 1792 it deliberated for four weeks after the French invasion before calling out the imperial forces, and for four months more before declaring war.

The only other great German power was Prussia, and her policy

\* Leopold, before his accession in 1790, had governed Tuscany well. He shared Joseph's "benevolence", but showed more tact, and restored harmony at home. Abroad, he reversed Joseph's policy of friendship with Russia, made an advantageous peace with the Turks, and checked Prussian ambitions without losing Prussian friendship: the French he had long regarded as Austria's "natural enemies".

since the days of the great Frederic had been dominated by hostility to Austria—a feeling cordially reciprocated. Another legacy of Frederic's, the centralising of all authority in the king, had resulted, thanks to the incompetence of his successor, in bringing its efficiency, whether in peace or war, to a low ebb. Prussia was, and was for twenty years to remain, more interested in increasing her own dominion, at the expense either of Poland or of Hanover, than in resisting the aggression of France, and felt no interest in maintaining an empire over which an Austrian presided. Two mutually hostile powers, both intent on territorial gains, were unlikely to co-operate effectively for a comparatively unselfish cause.

In the background was the great and enigmatic power of Russia, now in the hands of Catherine (1762–96), at the moment engaged in arranging a new partition of Poland, but liable to change its policy, so far as Western Europe was concerned, at the whim of each new sovereign. Such were the materials from which England had laboriously to build up coalitions against France, and that is why it is not mere patriotism which leads us to record the whole long struggle from the British point of view. We were the only people who never (except for the year's truce of Amiens) relaxed our hostility to French aggression, and, therefore, though the losses of other countries in men and material were infinitely greater than our own, we supply the only thread which holds its episodes together.

It would be absurd to maintain that our motives were entirely altruistic: we were genuinely afraid of having the French in Antwerp: but there were higher motives than mere self-preservation acting on the British mind. We resented the French offer of "*fraternité et secours*" to the oppressed in other countries as an impertinence, and though there undoubtedly were "oppressed" classes in England, they came to feel that the "Liberty and Fraternity" which the French offered seemed in operation to be neither free nor fraternal, as they understood the words. The nation was really shocked by the bloodshed in Paris, and as time went on we came to feel once more that not unreasonable dislike of an overweening power which had slowly roused us against Louis XIV, and was to rouse us with equal slowness in a later century. It is easy, and true, for critics to say that our insular position, which frees us from some temptations and many dangers, makes it easy for us to assume a position of moral superiority, and that our policy throughout the struggle was neither uniformly wise nor uniformly successful, but, when all possible deductions

have been made, it remains true that we were right to see in French claims a menace to the peace of the world, and that we did "save ourselves by our exertions and Europe by our example".

### *The Wars of the Revolution 1789-1802*

Taking the point of view which we have suggested, we can pass rapidly over the first years of war. By 1794 the French had been amazingly successful: the architect of their success was Carnot, who first enunciated the principle of "a nation in arms": "from the moment danger exists", he said in 1790, "every citizen is a soldier"; and four years later he laid down the general rules always to manoeuvre *en masse*, and to follow up the enemy without pause until he is completely destroyed. This was Danton's cry "de l'audace, et encore de l'audace, et toujours de l'audace", translated into terms of war, and the French nation responded in a way which shamed the lukewarm patriotism and the torpid strategy of her opponents.

For the French profited much by the follies of those opposed to her: Austrian sluggishness gave them their first triumph over the Prussians at Valmy in 1792, and some much-needed encouragement: British generalship was slow-moving and undistinguished after we, with Holland, entered the war in 1793. Two years later the Austrian Netherlands, Nice and Savoy, had passed into French hands, and their armies held Holland and all Germany west of the Rhine, while Austria, preoccupied with the Third Partition of Poland, was for the moment negligible as an enemy.

Though in 1791 the Assembly had disclaimed all desire for conquest, they were by now militant missionaries for democracy, and their converts had not yet discovered that they were expected to pay the cost of their conversion. The French had, it is true, lost much of their Toulon fleet, and more ships on "the glorious first of June" 1794 (though their privateers were active and successful) and also some West Indian islands, but their star was plainly in the ascendant. Next year Prussia made peace, having her eyes on Poland, and Spain followed soon after: England and Austria were left alone.

In 1796 the war enters on a new phase and the name of Bonaparte first becomes famous.\*

\* It appears that the first mention of Bonaparte's name in a despatch to England occurs in December 1793, which says that a captain of artillery "nommé Bonaparte, très républicain, a été tué sous les murs de Toulon"; it is interesting to speculate on the difference it would have made had this report been correct.

He induced the Directory, while sending other armies to attack Austria across the Rhine, to send him to Italy. There, by the first of his masterly campaigns, he forced peace on Sardinia, entered Milan in triumph, and compelled both the Pope and the King of Naples to accept an armistice. The Directory and he had no hesitation in making war pay for itself: "Leave nothing in Italy", they told him, "which will be useful to us": and he extorted lavish contributions both of money and of works of art. Though the French generals across the Rhine were beaten by the Archduke Charles, Bonaparte's success induced Prussia to make a definite treaty agreeing to the cession of the lands west of the Rhine—an act of treachery to the Empire. Several more victories over the Austrians in Italy, of which Rivoli (January 1797) was the last and most crushing, induced Austria to come to terms, and, by a bargain shameful to both sides, much of the territory of the free and innocent State of Venice was handed over to her as compensation for the loss of the Netherlands and Lombardy, the latter to form part of a new Cisalpine republic: these terms were embodied in the Peace of Campo Formio (October 1797).

Bonaparte's successes had caused Pitt to explore the possibilities of peace, and not without reason. Taxation was heavy: the harvest was bad: recruiting was ill-organised and unpopular: Pitt's windows were broken: shots were fired at the king. But the French were not disposed to treat with us, and we cannot blame them: in December 1796, they had 15,000 men under Hoche ready to sail for Ireland, then inadequately defended by 12,000 inexperienced troops. The wind came to our rescue, playing in reality the part piously ascribed to it in the days of the Armada: the French fleet was first dispersed, and when it reached the Munster coast a gale made landing impossible, so that the perhaps unavoidable errors of the British blockade were not punished as they might have been. But after Rivoli the French were in no mood to treat, and by the end of the year Britain stood alone.

But 1797 had brought us other great dangers and some really definite triumphs. The dangers were obvious: we had against us the combined Dutch, French and Spanish fleets: we were outnumbered on the sea and had to face a hostile coast (except for Portugal) from the Zuyder Zee to Toulon. In February Sir John Jervis, with fifteen capital ships, destroyed off Cape St. Vincent a Spanish fleet of twenty-seven, with metal heavier than his own. But in April and May mutinies broke out in the Channel Fleet and

at the Nore to secure the redress of the very real grievances under which our sailors suffered: the shock to the nation was terrible, but the dispute was settled in a way which did credit to the government, to Lord Howe, and to the mutineers themselves. The peril had been very great, for a Dutch fleet was lying in the Texel ready to convoy another army to Ireland, and it was only by the mercy of Providence that it failed to realise that for three days Admiral Duncan was blockading them with only two ships, and they possibly mutinous: in September, with his fleet restored, he defeated them on equal terms at Camperdown, and the country and Pitt were saved again. He trebled and quadrupled the taxes, and though this caused a great outcry, money, by a paradox not uncharacteristic of the nation, poured in by way of voluntary contribution.

In the same month as the battle of Camperdown the *coup d'état* of Fructidor had ended constitutional government in France and had given political influence to Bonaparte, now deservedly the national hero. He used it to attempt to realise the one great ambition of his life—the conquest of England in the East: he was in touch with “Citoyen Tippoo” and Egypt was to be only the stepping-stone to India. He planned a Suez Canal, and even without that his mere occupation of Egypt would have been a deadly blow to our Indian trade.\* Once again the navy did its part, and Nelson’s amazing victory of the Nile (August 1798), the climax to a heartbreaking game of hide-and-seek in the Mediterranean, shattered his dream, and cut him off not only from India but from France for more than a year.

We had, during his absence, a great opportunity, but let it slip away. Though a Second Coalition was formed, including Austria and Russia (where Paul (1796-1801) had recently succeeded Catherine); though Sidney Smith with a couple of ships foiled Bonaparte’s scheme of Syrian adventure; though Tippoo was defeated and slain at Seringapatam; though the Austrians fought well, and the Russians under Suvoroff performed prodigies of

\* It was a fortunate decision for England: had Bonaparte been in France when 30,000 Irish peasants rose in Ireland in May 1798, it is difficult to believe that he would not have found a way to exploit his opportunity. His admirers praise the greatness of his Eastern schemes: his critics see in them the plans of an adventurer preferring his career to his country. In any case the moment was lost: the rising was suppressed, and in the Mediterranean the navy brought its own solution. “On what do the destinies of Empires hang!” said Napoleon at St. Helena. “If, instead of the expedition of Egypt, I had made that of Ireland . . . what would England have been to-day? and the Continent? and the political world?” Our guardian angel seems to take a sinister pleasure in bringing us to the verge of disaster.

valour, the year was on the whole one of failure so far as decisive results are concerned. The allies failed to co-operate successfully, and a disastrous expedition to Holland ruined all good relations between Russia and ourselves. Another effect of it was to shatter most unjustly the nation's faith in its army: it is true that it had so far, despite many valiant actions, won no substantial success on the continent of Europe, on which it was hardly to set foot for the next nine years.

Napoleon returned from Egypt in October 1799, and his presence was soon felt: this time it was he who sought for peace and we who refused it: we were certainly right to distrust his sincerity, but our manner of refusal and our demand for a Bourbon restoration rallied France behind him.

If 1798 had been a year of unrealised hopes of success for the Allies, 1800 was a year of unmitigated disaster. In June Bonaparte crossed the Alps and crushed the Austrians at Marengo: in December Moreau routed them at Hohenlinden, and the Peace of Lunéville early next year was bought by the surrender of many of the minor states of the Empire and of all territory west of the Rhine: the King of Naples sought for peace: Portugal, our old ally, was in hourly danger of invasion: Britain had no friend in the world—indeed, she had new enemies, for Russia (deeply dissatisfied with her recent allies), was prepared, with Prussia, Sweden and Denmark, to co-operate with France in ruining our carrying trade. At this moment Pitt's government fell, because the king refused to allow that measure of Catholic emancipation the hope of which had helped to secure the union of Ireland: the nation was in the undistinguished hands of Addington, afterwards deservedly detested as Lord Sidmouth.

At this dark moment, and under the uninspiring auspices of Addington, the tide turned. At Copenhagen, Nelson (really, though not nominally, in command) destroyed the Danish fleet in April and Bonaparte's Baltic plans with it: the Tsar Paul died, and his successor Alexander (1801–25) abandoned his policy: a few days later came the news of Abercromby's great victory before Alexandria (March 31st, 1801) which finally destroyed French hopes in Egypt. But the country was tired of war, and the Ministry, having no real grasp of the principles for which we were contending ("Ideologies", as they would now be called, were not their *métier*) was anxious to gratify the country. Pitt supported the peace proposals, which were carried by enormous majorities in Parlia-

ment. The main features of the Peace of Amiens were that we gave up all our conquests except Ceylon and Trinidad, and that France retained Belgium and her gains up to the frontier of the Rhine.

It cannot be claimed that Pitt was a great War minister: it was a cruel fate which forced him to play this part and denied him the opportunity of carrying out those political and economic reforms for which his nature and his talents fitted him. But there is some excuse for his failures. It was not unnatural that he should fail to foresee the amazing strength which the French army developed under Carnot's guidance: it was not unnatural that, at any rate at first, he should have expected from his allies more support and more enthusiasm than he received: it was natural that he, his father's son, should have believed that it was in the Western hemisphere that France had most to lose and Britain to gain. This was, as Windham said, "to hunt the sheep before slaying the dog": but it had at least the effect of keeping his attention on the sea, and it was he and Dundas who brought back our fleet to the Mediterranean, where Cromwell, William, and Marlborough had wished to see it.\* But his greatest service in war came from the inspiration of his unfaltering courage and the splendid elevation of the language in which he called his countrymen to endure.†

It is easy for us to blame the repressive measures which his Government thought necessary at home, but not, perhaps, so easy to estimate their difficulties justly. In days when Parliament was unrepresentative, newspapers few, and communications slow, it was hard for Ministers to form a true judgment of dangers which even now it is not simple to assess. The country was frightened, and the Government was sufficiently representative to share its alarm.

### *France between the two Wars*

We may use the short interval before war broke out again to describe briefly the new constitution which Napoleon gave to

\* Another Churchill, in a later day has shown the same appreciation of the vital importance of the Mediterranean when, at a perilous moment, he risked everything to ensure the safety of its African shore.

† The blame and praise given to Pitt should be shared by his closest friend Henry Dundas (Lord Melville) whose support was invaluable in his early days as Prime Minister and on whom he greatly relied throughout. Posterity, remembering that he was impeached for corruption, has, in spite of his acquittal, given this very able man more blame and less praise than he deserved. He shared Pitt's Liberal sentiments towards Catholic Ireland, and, if he was too ready to encourage his colonial hopes, it is largely to him that we owe the capture and retention of the Cape and Ceylon. But to be "Treasurer of the Navy", responsible also for Scotland, India, the Home Office and the prosecution of the war, was too heavy a burden even for this most capable (and convivial) of Scots.

France, though that will carry us beyond the period of truce. Its essence was that centralisation so dear to the French mind. He was able, not unjustly, to represent himself as aloof from all party allegiance, and anxious to secure the co-operation of all parties in the service of France, but it was on the condition that they were ready to act under his direction: he welcomed ability wherever he found it, provided it was ready to serve and to obey. Identifying France with himself, rather than himself with France, he was able to turn the phrase *L'état c'est moi* from a vainglorious boast into a literal reality.

His most famous, though not his most personal, achievement was the promulgation of the Code Napoléon, and he deserves the credit not of a great legislator but of having "vigorously pursued the work of consolidating and popularising law by the help of all the skilled and scientific minds whose resources were at his command" (Fyffe, *Modern Europe*, I, 259): and he thereby rendered a great service not only to France but to all those other regions to which French influence extended.

So far as government went, the principle was simple: the communal liberties which the Revolution had introduced were superseded by a system in which everything depended on the central government. The Prefects of Departments were appointed by himself, and the Maires, the local authorities, and almost all the judges were appointed directly or indirectly from Paris. It was a logical and efficient system, but the price paid was heavy, and Thiers, who once lauded the system to the skies, "lived to declare, as Chief of the State himself, that the first need of France was the decentralisation of power". (Fyffe, *op. cit.*, I, 209.)

His bargain with Rome was a more personal affair: by the Concordat, all French bishops, whether non-juring or constitutional, were bidden to resign their Sees into the hands of the Pope, and their places taken by Bonaparte's nominees. The result was to strengthen considerably the Papal authority, which no longer need fear the independence of a Gallican Church—a result to which the First Consul was indifferent—and to secure for him the support of a clergy who were drawn into his system.

The same systematising policy, when applied to the other states which France controlled, was what led inevitably to the renewal of the war. Even while the peace negotiations were in progress he was taking steps to establish his authority over the countries which France claimed to have emancipated, and when



peace was signed these measures proceeded rapidly. In September 1801, he dissolved the "Batavian Republic's" government and proposed a constitution which he could easily control: in January 1802, he accepted the office of President of the Italian Republic; in September he annexed Piedmont: in October he became "Mediator of the Helvetic League". Meanwhile he was taking steps to assert his authority in Germany and imposing his solutions on the Diet of Ratisbon. In virtue of an agreement with Alexander of Russia made in 1801, he was able to reorganise the Empire, enriching the smaller states like Bavaria, Baden and Wurtemberg with the spoils of lesser principalities, with the object of leaving Prussia and Austria to balance one another while the rest of Germany looked to him as its patron. Germany as a whole, no doubt, gained by the abolition of petty jurisdictions, but it was impossible to believe either that Bonaparte's motives were altruistic or that his ambition was satisfied. It was this conviction which led England to renew the war in 1803 and to call Pitt again to office next year.

It is impossible not to feel that it was at this point that Bonaparte missed his great opportunity. If he had been less impatient, he had all the cards in his hands. We were tired of war: we had been assured by no less an authority than Nelson that the possession of Malta could be of no importance to us: we should have parted with it without a qualm, if Bonaparte had given us no reason to mistrust him. Had he been prepared to bide his time, it is difficult to believe that we should have found friends in Europe ready to come to our help if in a few years he decided to concentrate on our destruction. But his European aggressions, and his known hopes of reviving his Egyptian schemes, roused us, very unwillingly, to fight once more, and by 1805 he had himself raised up allies for us upon the Continent. The gods, determined on his downfall, had maddened him by success and were to continue that process of intoxication for several years to come.

### *The Second War 1803-15*

In the Napoleonic war—for though Bonaparte did not take the title of Emperor till 1804, it may rightly be called by his name—we had some advantages which were denied to us in the first. The country was completely united: in the earlier war, though the opposition was small, it could count on the great personality of Fox: now (though he had been Bonaparte's guest during the

peace period) it was not long before he was in the Government, and thereafter (though the Whigs tended to regard the Peninsular War as a Tory affair and distrusted Wellington) there was no one who was not determined to fight to the end.

Again, the army at last got a fair field on which to show what it could do: hitherto it had been handicapped by gross inefficiency at the War Office, which had launched it either on West Indian enterprises with no arrangements to save it from the ravages of the climate, or on European campaigns with no proper provision for transport or supply. Wellington, who had learnt in India that these matters are of crucial importance, was able to ensure that these mistakes were not made again: it was largely by attention to transport that he made, maintained and increased his fame: and the Duke of York deserves more credit than he has received for his reforms at the War Office.

The navy had provided the brilliant episodes of the first war and was not to fail us now. Nelson had put much of his spirit into it, and the efforts of his admirals were splendidly supported at the Admiralty, during his brief tenure of office, by Lord Barham, whose name, outside the navy, is too little known.\*

In this war we were never as near to ultimate disaster as in the first, for the menace of invasion which Trafalgar finally removed depended on an efficiency in the French at sea which they had not for many years displayed. The sea, which had kept the French from any serious attempt on Sicily, might well have saved this island, unless indeed our navy had been not only dispersed but routed: in any case for the ten years after Trafalgar this island never had to face the perils it had met in 1796-97.

It is impossible, in the space at our disposal, to do justice to the crowded events of these twelve years: we will rather attempt, with a minimum of comment, to give their general outline.

From 1803-5 Napoleon was planning the invasion of England: these plans reached their climax in 1805 when, now in alliance with Spain, he hoped to secure the command of the Channel for the necessary period, estimated by him at different times as twelve hours or three days: this hope was baffled by the vigilance of

\* It seems impossible to exaggerate the change of spirit which Nelson introduced into the navy: Cochrane (who never served under him) repeatedly heard him say: "Never mind manoeuvres, always go at them". Cochrane's subsequent career shows not only that he had learnt the lesson, but also how great were the abuses at the Admiralty with which the navy of all ranks had to contend. The nation hardly deserved the splendid service it received.

Cornwallis, and the energy of Barham, and was finally destroyed by Nelson at Trafalgar on October 21st. Not for the last time "a few leagues of sea" had "protected the civilisation of the world".

By this time Napoleon had raised up other enemies for himself: Russia was annoyed by the invasion of Hanover (undertaken as a blow at England) in May 1803, by the murder of the Duke d'Enghien in March 1804, and by Bonaparte's assumption of the title of Emperor in May: the Emperor Francis (who compensated himself for this assumption by calling himself Emperor of Austria in August) was offended by Napoleon's taking the iron crown of Lombardy, and both Powers joined the Third Coalition in 1805. Prussia, in spite of much provocation, remained feebly neutral.

Napoleon, finding the invasion of England impossible, lost no time in taking vengeance on his other enemies: with a speed which recalls Marlborough's march to Blenheim, he carried the troops assembled on the Channel coast across Europe and fell upon the Austrians before the Russians could join them; they were crushed at Ulm (October 17), and Austerlitz (December 2): in December Austria signed the humiliating treaty of Pressburg, which robbed her of 3,000,000 subjects and brought the Holy Roman Empire to a definite end. Its place was taken by a Confederation of the Rhine which made Napoleon practical master of Germany.

Prussia, always jealous of Austria, and anxious to acquire Hanover at England's expense, had for some time been hesitating, but, disliking the Confederation of the Rhine, and finding that Napoleon's intentions about Hanover were more than doubtful, decided, too late, that he was her real enemy, and declared war. She was disgracefully beaten at Jena (October 1806), and though she at last united with the Russians and had some success, the battle of Friedland in 1807 meant the end of the Coalition; Napoleon made friends with the Tsar at Tilsit (July 1807),\* and, Prussia being now negligible, was able to embark on his alternative to invasion—the crippling of England by the Continental System which was to destroy her commerce. This was proclaimed by the Berlin Decree, issued from that conquered capital, declar-

\* Napoleon and Alexander between them agreed to deprive Prussia of half her territory: all west of the Elbe to become the Kingdom of Westphalia for Napoleon's brother Jerome, and her Polish provinces to become the Grand Duchy of Warsaw under the King of Saxony. Alexander was to receive Finland and the Danubian provinces of Turkey which he hoped France would help him to secure.

ing that all goods of British origin by land or sea were to be confiscated. Russia agreed and all subject territories were bidden to enforce it. It was very fortunate for us that Napoleon chose to attack our commerce and not our food supplies. Acting on a mistaken theory of economics, he made no objection to our receiving agricultural products, provided that manufactured goods were not sent with them: the latter were thrown into the sea, while the former saved us from starvation at a time when, even in good years, we could not grow enough wheat for ourselves. Instead of trying to starve us, which he might conceivably have done, he hoped to ruin us by selling us corn at a very high price, in which he lamentably failed (Holland Rose, *Napoleon*, II, pp. 219 f.). The Continental System was in fact his ruin, leading as it did to his disastrous adventures in Spain and Russia, as well as to annexations elsewhere.

This attempt lasted for five years, till 1812: we were saved (apart from our somewhat high-handed seizure of the Danish fleet in 1807) by the fact that the Industrial Revolution had made it possible to develop our industries in a way forbidden to a war-harassed continent, and by the constancy of the nation in years of great distress.\* We retaliated by Orders in Council, which declared the blockade of all ports which excluded British goods, and meant, in effect, that the Continent should have no seaborne trade except with England: this (though it involved us in a regrettable war with the United States in 1812, which neither side can remember with satisfaction) inflicted so much hardship on the Continent, especially on Germany, that Napoleon's popularity was seriously undermined—a result increased by his harsh treatment of the Pope at this same period.

We now come to the first of the great mistakes which were to cost Napoleon his throne—the seizure of Spain in 1808. The incapable and corrupt Spanish Government had been led to connive at an invasion of Portugal in 1807 in the hope that they were to share in the spoils. Taking advantage of dissensions between the incapable King Charles of Spain and his deplorable son Ferdinand, Napoleon kidnapped them both, induced them to abdicate, and made his own brother Joseph king, in June 1808. His Spanish policy was based on three miscalculations, due to his

\* Among our mercies, we may reckon the facts that in this century our coal lay near our iron, and that the use of it was discovered just when our timber fuel was running short: nor should we forget the three Lancashire men, Hargreaves, Arkwright and Crompton, whose inventions created the industrial North.

ignorance of Spanish character, his ignorance of Spanish geography and his persistent disparagement of the British Army, which first entered Portugal in August. The first caused him to fail to anticipate Spanish resistance and to underrate its importance; the second to believe that to hold Madrid was to hold Spain; and the third to believe to the last that Wellington was a bad general in command of bad troops. In fact, the Spaniards, though ill-disciplined, were passionately patriotic and made admirable guerilla soldiers; the communications in Spain proved impossible to maintain\*; and Wellington and his men (fighting in line against the massed columns of the French) defeated one French Marshal after another for five years, so that the war became a "running sore" which sapped French strength elsewhere: it is a classic example of the use of sea power to facilitate land operations.

Meanwhile Austria, naturally dissatisfied with the Treaty of Pressburg and encouraged by the news from Spain, plunged into war once more in 1809. Her hopes, raised high by the Battle of Aspern in May, were shattered at Wagram in July, and by the end of the year the Treaty of Vienna had robbed her of still more territory and prepared the way for the marriage of Napoleon to the emperor's daughter.

But other enemies were rising against him: Prussia, recreated by men like Stein, Hardenberg and Scharnhorst, suffering cruelly under the British blockade, and inspired by German writers (with the notable exception of Goethe), was becoming again a strong and self-respecting country, and Alexander of Russia, beginning to repent his hero-worship at Tilsit, was disposed by 1810 to resent the losses which Napoleon's system inflicted on Russian commerce.

In 1812 Napoleon made his second great mistake, and, relying on England's preoccupation with her American war and Russia's with a war with Turkey, embarked on his Russian expedition, having secured the half-hearted support of Austria and Prussia. Its appalling disasters released the hostility of Europe: Prussia went over to the Tsar's victorious side in March, and Austria did the same in August: by 1813, thanks largely to the wisdom and patience of Castlereagh, the Fourth Coalition was formed and was also joined by Sweden.

\* A century before, Stanhope had remarked that "in Spain armies of 20,000 or 30,000 might roam about the country till doomsday with no effect". (Basil Williams, *Stanhope*, p. 118.)

Napoleon for a time had reasonable hopes of dividing the Allies, and he won some great military successes: like other dictators, he continued to trust in "his star", and believed that "*une bonne bataille*" would restore the situation, but his diplomatic judgment failed at the crisis, and the Battle of the Nations at Leipzig in October led to the collapse of the Confederation of the Rhine: the disaster which he met there came four months after Wellington's final Spanish triumph at Vittoria. In the hour of success, as in its earlier days, it was Castlereagh who held the Coalition together, and induced its members to agree that France should not be humiliated and that she should be given neither more nor less than her frontiers of 1792. This agreement secured unity until, after some final brilliant manoeuvres in France, Napoleon abdicated in April 1814.

All the world knows how, while the Allies were wrangling at Vienna, Napoleon returned from Elba and how the campaign of the Hundred Days ended at Waterloo—a battle lost partly by bad staff work for which he must bear the responsibility, and partly through his continuing to underrate both Wellington and his troops.\* No two men could have been more temperamentally opposed, the one determined to dominate, rightly convinced of his own supreme ability but cursed with an irredeemable selfishness and an insatiable ambition; the other "perhaps the greatest man who was ever sincerely content to serve", completely unselfish and profoundly conscious of his own limitations: the one the embodiment of the national passion for glory, the other the honest, prosaic and faithful servant of "a nation of shopkeepers".

We have had no space to describe Wellington's achievements in the Peninsula, and as we shall have, for the same reason, to omit his political performance, we may take the opportunity here for a brief estimate of his character. As a soldier, he had neither Marlborough's genius nor his personal charm, but he shared his common sense and his patience, and both of them found their vindication at Torres Vedras and at Waterloo where, in his characteristic phrase "the French came on in the old way and we beat them in the old way". No one who has studied the political and military history of the war can fail to admire the way in which he triumphed over innumerable difficulties, and the constancy with

\* It was the same mistake which the French had made in 1705 when they had "a mediocre opinion" of Marlborough as "a mortified adventurer" who had won Blenheim by "chance alone". (See Trevelyan, *Reminiscences*, p. 57.)

which he carried out a task which a great soldier like Sir John Moore had declared to be impossible.

There are some who find it hard to forgive his fundamental Toryism, and a hardness of heart which was perhaps more apparent than real: but to others his honesty and his simplicity make so strong an appeal that they will say (as Wilberforce said after the Duke's labours for the anti-slavery cause) "I shall love all generals the better for him as long as I live".

An historian who finds him personally unattractive says that "his true title to fame is that he was the most industrious, the most patriotic, the most faithful, and the most single-hearted public servant that has ever toiled for the British nation" (Fortescue, X, 226): there can be few nobler epitaphs.\*

### *Napoleon*

To write anything new of Napoleon is impossible, but the opinion may be hazarded that he is perhaps the greatest example which history has to offer of the supremely able man. Whatever sheer ability can accomplish he did with a speed and a success unparalleled, making wars, treaties, laws and constitutions with equal facility, and imposing his personality on men of every type, statesmen and scientists, poets and philosophers, conscripts and kings, till at his zenith nothing seemed impossible to him—a man "superlatively great in all that pertains to government, the quickening of human energies and the art of war". (Holland Rose, *op. cit.*, II, 374.)

Besides the natural rhapsodies of Victor Hugo and other Frenchmen, his achievements have been sung by poets not of his own land:

"Cannon his name,  
Cannon his voice, he came,"

cried Meredith: no one can forget how in Heine's words the news of his imprisonment roused the Two Grenadiers to action: the tidings of his death—"Ei fu!"—inspired Manzoni with his greatest ode. If, like him, we go on to ask whether his glory was

\* It should not be forgotten that the Duke had a real command of the English language. When he was asked by the Government in 1840 whether he had any objection to Napoleon's body being brought from St. Helena to Paris, he replied: "Field Marshal the Duke of Wellington presents his compliments to Her Majesty's Ministers. If they wish to know Field Marshal the Duke of Wellington's opinion as on a matter of public policy, he must decline to give one. If, however, they wish only to consult him as a private individual, Field Marshal the Duke of Wellington has no hesitation in saying that he does not care one twopenny damn what becomes of the ashes of Napoleon Bonaparte".

real—"fu vera gloria"?—we can only answer, as he does, by leaving the hard decision to posterity. But the moralist must doubt whether true glory is within the reach of a man without ideals, and without dreams, who on the contrary despised the dreams of others till that contempt brought him to his ruin—a man who had no discernible purpose save his own aggrandisement. The French armies set out at first to proclaim a new liberty, vague and visionary, but real: it was Napoleon who, though he did not invent it, consecrated the doctrine that war must be made a profitable concern, and followed it with a complete disregard of scruple, combining the ruthlessness of a mediæval buccaneer with the efficiency of a modern business man. Patriotism to him was a mere name, and he was incapable of believing in its power over others. He loved France, but in Meredith's phrase, if "he loved her more than little" he loved her "less than much", and so he remains "*Hugest of engines, a much limited man*".

Consequently, when fortune offered him the most splendid opportunities, he did not know how to use them but was driven to ever more gigantic schemes for his own glorification: as in his early days he had planned to conquer India through Egypt, so in his prime he hoped to march through Russia to the Ganges: "never having come face to face with thoroughly able, well-equipped and stubborn antagonists until the year 1812" he had developed a "fatal obstinacy" which proved his ruin (Holland Rose). Having no ideals, he had no taste: the sham classicism which he introduced into France was fundamentally vulgar, and such episodes as his Hapsburg marriage, his flamboyant proclamations, and his legacy to a would-be assassin of the Duke of Wellington, suggest that the vulgarity was in his soul.

He was a very great man, judged by all purely terrestrial standards, and might have sat as the model for a statue of Mental Energy, but his greatness was that of a mere Colossus rather than that of an Alexander, a Caesar or a Charlemagne, or, in a smaller sphere, of a Washington or a Chatham: it is a fitting nemesis that his greatest effect on Europe should have been the fostering therein of liberty and patriotism, two sentiments which he loathed, and the ultimate aggrandisement of Prussia, a state which he despised; and that he should in the end have left France weaker than he found her.

"That which is called an *Able Man*", wrote the great Lord Halifax, "is a great Over-valuer of the World and all that belongeth



to it: all that can be said of him is, that he maketh the best of the General Mistake." By no one in history has that General Mistake been more successfully exploited than by Napoleon Bonaparte.

### *The Congress of Vienna*

Those who applaud the results of the Congress do so on the grounds that the peace to which it led was not vindictive,\* and that it saved Europe from any major war for more than half a century: its critics—and past peace-makers find few to admire them—complain with equal justice that, while professing "to secure the rights, the freedom and the independence of all nations", its members had no real conception of what was meant by "nationality", and interpreted it as meaning the personal rights of individual sovereigns without regard to the wishes of their subjects—Talleyrand's famous principle of "legitimacy". The forcible addition of Norway to Sweden (to compensate the latter for losing Finland to Russia),† and the incorporation of Belgium with Holland (to be a defence against France) have proved mistakes, and the union of Genoa with Piedmont, made with a similar purpose, served in fact the very different end of promoting Italian unity.‡

This criticism is perfectly just, but it fails, as criticism after the event usually does, to take account of the difficulties which the peacemakers had to face, and to allow for Prussian jealousy of Austria, Austrian alarm at the pretensions and proposals of the Tsar, or for the skill of Talleyrand, who fomented every disagreement between the Allies, and successfully claimed a place for France at the Conference table.

It is possible, and on the whole right, to take the more charitable view. They did establish a European Concert which, with all its obvious defects, encouraged the great Powers to act in reasonable harmony for an appreciable period, and though their harmonious action was largely repressive, it did imply a recognition that Europe had a common interest, which had been entirely

\* After Napoleon's return, the French frontiers were set rather farther back and France was ordered to restore stolen works of art.

† General Bernadotte, an ambitious Gascon, had been allowed by Napoleon in 1810 to accept the throne of Sweden, but he refused to co-operate in the execution of the Berlin Decree, and joined the Allies in 1812. Norway, which was torn from Denmark as a punishment for its fidelity to Napoleon, resented the union with Sweden, and broke away in 1905.

‡ The handing over of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw to Russia cannot be reckoned a sin against the principle of nationality, for Alexander promised, and gave, her a constitution of her own.

absent from the treaties of the past. This was largely due to Alexander, who dreamt of a Confederation of Europe and universal peace, till Metternich thought that "his mind was affected," for "peace and goodwill engrossed all his thoughts". Castlereagh (who also thought the Tsar's mind "not completely sound") deserves the credit of having induced the Congress to condemn the slave trade, though his attempts to get this condemnation translated into action were ascribed to the "egoism and commercial calculation" of his country.\*

\* It is permissible for an Englishman to quote the verdict of an historian not given to enthusiasm: "the unweary, unostentatious and inglorious crusade of England against slavery may probably be regarded as among the three or four perfectly virtuous pages comprised in the history of nations". (Lecky, *European Morals*, I, 153.)

## The Age of Metternich 1815-48

"For a century, between Waterloo and 1914, there existed an order of power good enough to prevent a great war . . . over this order Great Britain presided by means of her unchallenged command of the seas."\* But this presidency, if real, was by no means apparent, and the years we have now to consider have been described as the Age of Metternich; the phrase is appropriate, as implying not that his principles uniformly prevailed, but that they provide the background against which European history can most conveniently be studied. Those principles were simple: he regarded the past with that uncritical optimism which most people reserve for the future, and Austria as a model for the world. He was entirely devoted to his country's interests as he saw them, and was as unmistakably a "patriot" as those whose activity he strove to suppress: autocracy, little as we may like it, has, like democracy, its devotees and martyrs. His difficulties were threefold—in the nature of the "liberalism" which he wished to fight, in the character of the allies on whom he had to rely, and in that of the monarchs whose "legitimate" cause he was pledged to support.†

Napoleon, as has already been said, was the unwilling and unconscious agent in fostering the liberal sentiment in Europe. Wherever the French influence had extended, it was inevitable that new ideas of personal liberty should spread, and this effect of the Revolution was more enduring than the political institutions by which he repressed and dragooned it. Feudalism could never revive, and it was inevitable that peoples, more free to think for themselves, should wish to have a hand in shaping the new order for their countries. Their sentiments might be romantic or practical; they might worship at the shrine of Rousseau or at that of Bentham; they might dream of the Rights of man or of the

\* W. Lippmann, *U.S. Foreign Policy*, p. 62.

† It is perhaps truer to say that Metternich really had no principles as a politician except that of stability, and there are some who regard him as the very efficient mouthpiece of the Emperor Francis. He was really a brilliant diplomatist, whose greatest successes had been in earlier years, surviving into an age which called not for diplomacy but statesmanship. Napoleon's verdict on him was characteristic—"he approaches being a statesman; he lies very well". (Sandeman, *Metternich*, p. 342.)

more sober profits of Utilitarianism; or they might, as in Germany and Italy, combine the practical with the romantic, but throughout Europe Metternich saw "Liberalism" raising its horrid head, in the violence of mobs, the mild eloquence of professors, or in the sinister activity of gymnastic societies.

This was the problem, but the Allied Powers were by no means agreed on the solution. Alexander saw it in their united action, but as England's co-operation was refused from the first, and France came to agree with her, the Concert was for practical purposes reduced to Russia, Austria and Prussia (which was under the influence of one or other of its neighbours). But Metternich saw another difficulty: he was, as a good Austrian, profoundly jealous of Russia, and had no desire to see her troops helping to "restore order" in Western Europe. Italy he regarded as a purely Austrian concern, and on this point Castlereagh agreed with him, the British policy being to treat each case on its merits. France claimed, and was ultimately allowed, a similar special interest in Spain, but no one was prepared to agree that Greece was the private concern of Russia.

And in addition there were personal difficulties in the way of joint action. Alexander had to be cured of his romantic liberalism, and Frederic William III of Prussia (1797-1840) to be frightened into denying the Constitution which he had promised to his people—two tasks which Metternich successfully accomplished. Of Castlereagh he had hopes which were not destined to be realised, for, when summoned to one of the Conferences of the Powers he wrote a reply "*très long, assez dur même, et assez tranchant dans son langage*", refusing emphatically to agree to any general schemes of intervention in the internal affairs of other states: Canning was even less likely to interfere to help autocracy, and Palmerston's intervention, when his time came, was in the opposite direction.\*

Such were Metternich's difficulties with his allies; his third difficulty came from the extravagance of the restored monarchs; Louis XVIII, though personally not illiberal, was unable to check his *émigré* reactionaries or to prevent a "White Terror" in the South of France: Ferdinand of Naples, whose talent for pious perjury amounted to genius, was a liability rather than an asset; and a King of Spain who founded a professorship of bull-fighting.

\* Metternich, who sorrowfully said that all Englishmen were slightly mad, called Canning "the scourge of the world". (Sandeman, *op. cit.*, 372-4.)

and a Pope who abolished street-lighting as a republican innovation, were not clients whom it was easy wholeheartedly to defend.

Such were Metternich's preoccupations: we have now to see with how much success he met them: our period may be divided at 1830, when the July Revolution in France stirred the liberals throughout Europe to new activity.

### *France 1815-30*

The problems of France were domestic and comparatively simple, for there the Powers had some right to intervene, and at first an army of occupation to enforce their desires. They did intervene to help the king to check the Ultra-royalist party, but after 1818 the army was withdrawn and the country left to itself. The violence of the Royalists, heightened in 1824 by the accession of Charles X, who had long been their leader, led in 1830 to the expulsion of the king, and to the elevation of Louis Philippe, of the Orleans branch of the family, who was prepared to restore the tricolour instead of the Bourbon flag, and to act as "a citizen King" with power strictly limited. The revolution, which was a Parisian affair, had really been republican in its origin, and the appointment of a "King of the French", with no conceivable glamour about him, was a temporary compromise—not a type of solution agreeable to the French temperament, or likely to content it long.

### *Spain*

King Ferdinand hastened to restore the Inquisition, and there, as in France, clerical reaction went to extreme lengths, the difference being that in Spain autocracy was in a real sense popular. The Liberals pinned their faith to the Constitution of 1812, which he had sworn to accept at his restoration: this was unfortunate, for "it had borrowed from the French Constitution of 1791 all its worst and most unworkable propositions", and was demonstrably unsuited to Spanish needs. When Ferdinand repudiated it, there was no popular outcry, but in 1820 revolution broke out and he was forced to accept it once more: then and in 1822 Alexander wished the Powers to act, and, in 1823, France, by now regarded as thoroughly respectable, invaded Spain and restored absolutism, her troops remaining there till 1828. Till Ferdinand's death in 1833 he remained a lamentable advertisement of autocracy,

though not without strong support from a large body of his subjects, who rejoiced to call themselves *Serviles*.

As Spain now ceases for a long time to play any part in European history, we may carry the story a little further. Ferdinand, in defiance of Spanish custom, left his crown to his infant daughter, Isabella, with her mother Christina as guardian \*: the clerical and legitimist party supported his brother Don Carlos, and long civil wars were the result.

But the fate of the Spanish colonies concerned Europe more seriously. They had no intention of forfeiting the practical liberty which they had won during the Peninsular War: were the Powers to insist on their return to the fold? Even Metternich and Alexander shrank from the obligation, and when Canning in a famous declaration expressed British approval of their action and recognised their independence (1824),† Austria, Russia and Prussia contented themselves with mild regrets at our sympathy with revolution.

### *Portugal*

The king, who had retired to Brazil in 1807, did not return in 1815, but proclaimed himself King of the two countries, which naturally did not please Portuguese sentiment. In 1821 the Cortes set up a Constitution based on that of Spain, and King John, who had returned from Brazil (which had declared itself independent but accepted him as Emperor), agreed to accept it in spite of the opposition of his brother Miguel. On his death, in 1825, his son Pedro became Emperor of Brazil, and his grand-daughter Maria Queen of Portugal. Though she was only seven, it was cynically arranged that she should marry her uncle Miguel, who, like Louis' brother Charles in France, was more royalist than the king. As was only to be expected, the wicked uncle seized the throne, and Portugal, like Spain, was faced with civil war, England in both countries favouring the Constitutional ladies. Our special interest in Portugal was based (like Portuguese action in the present century) on our long-standing treaty relation with her.

\* Isabella was to play a part in history later as the victim of the "Spanish marriages" scandal of 1816, and by her deposition to afford the occasion for the war of 1870. In that year an Italian prince, Amadeus, was given the crown, but resigned after two years, finding Spain no place for an honest king. After a brief republican interlude, Isabella's son, Alfonso, was restored in 1874.

† This was not, as is often thought, a personal act of Canning: it seems clear that Castlereagh (who had died in 1822) would have done the same, though perhaps with more deliberation and certainly with less dramatic language.

and was therefore not inconsistent with our refusal to interfere elsewhere.

### *Italy*

The risings in Italy, though they came to little, were significant for the future. The crown of Naples had been held for nine years by Joseph, Napoleon's brother, and Murat, his brother-in-law: the latter, who had joined Napoleon after his return from Elba, had been shot after coming back to his kingdom, so King Ferdinand of Naples had no rival. The reaction was not savage, but sufficient to exasperate those who had come to admire French methods, and the secret society of the Carbonari became powerful. There was a rising in 1820 to demand the inevitable Constitution of 1812. Ferdinand accepted it with a profusion of theatrical oaths—and wrote at once to Metternich to ask for help. He summoned the king to a conference of the Powers of Laibach, which he attended after more protestations of loyalty to the Constitution, all repudiated by simultaneous private letters. Metternich was able to satisfy his colleagues that Austria's interests in Italy justified her taking action alone to repress revolution there, and she repressed it without difficulty, crushing also an ill-timed rising against autocracy in Piedmont. She established a domination over Italy which, though not brutal, was based on a spy system which drove all liberal sentiment underground, and banished its leaders to Austrian prisons.

Metternich had, in fact, extended to Italy the inestimable blessings of Austrian rule, and no doubt felt himself to be her benefactor. Though Castlereagh may be excused for feeling that Austria had special rights in Italy, he should have remembered that we too had special duties to secure proper treatment for the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, and his failure is a blot on his distinguished record as a foreign minister.\*

### *Greece*

The rising in Greece was the most immediately fruitful of the liberal risings of the period, and must be treated at somewhat

\* The Kingdom of the Two Sicilies had been ruled since 1735 by a Spanish Bourbon House, descended from Philip V and Elizabeth Farnese (see p. 286). In the long reign of Ferdinand I (1759-1825) we had induced him to give Sicily a constitution (imperfectly observed) in 1812: it was at his court that Nelson's least glorious hours were spent.

greater length \*; it was also the one which raised the most difficult problems. Russia's interest in the European subjects of the Sultan was obvious: she had already special rights in the Danubian principalities, and the Greeks were members of the Orthodox Church of which she was the admitted champion. At the same time, while Austria was chronically jealous of Russia, England and France were disposed to believe that a strong Turkey was a useful check on Russian ambitions: no one was therefore prepared to allow Russia to act as the guardian of order in the East, as Austria had acted in Italy and France in Spain.

But there was a further domestic problem for Russia herself. Could the Tsar, the champion of autocracy in Western Europe, countenance a rising in the East against a Power which, though lamentably un-Christian, was undeniably "legitimate"? At first the Tsar, in spite of his Greek Minister, Capodistrias, thought not, and when a rising broke out in the Danubian provinces in 1821, led by a Russian prince, he at once denounced it.

The Sultan went out of his way to remove his scruples, for, after a revolt in the Morea a month later, he publicly hanged the Greek Patriarch in his sacred robes, and followed this up by a massacre of Christians. Alexander shared the indignation of his people, but Metternich's diplomacy, working on the not unreasonable horror felt in this country at the thought of another great war, postponed it for a time, during which the revolt spread. Great savagery marked the fighting on both sides, and the Turkish massacre of the whole population of Chios in 1822 shocked the conscience of Europe, already stirred by the sentimental appeal which the name of Greece makes to all lovers of the past.

The Greeks, who were good sailors, more than held their own by sea, and on land the heroic defence of Missolonghi (where Byron's death was his crowning service to the cause) forced the Sultan to summon to his help his powerful vassal, Mehemet Ali of Egypt, who had established his power there after the expulsion of the French. His general conquered the Morea and apparently intended to exterminate its population: Missolonghi fell, Athens was taken, and, in 1824, the Russians suggested a compromise peace which the Greeks rejected. At this moment Alexander died.

\* The Greek rising was only indirectly a result of the French Revolution, which had only affected the Ionian islands. It was organised by a secret society, the *Hetaïrîa Philikî*, based on Odessa, a city largely created by Greek traders. One of its heroes is Koraes who, besides early recognising the importance of the Greek *archaïs* language, was the real re-creator of the Greek language as we know it to-day.



Nicholas (1825-55) adopted a more vigorous policy, and by 1827 had signed a treaty with England and France, intended to put an end to the conflict. The Sultan had in the previous year massacred in Constantinople the whole force of Janissaries, who had refused his proposals for a reform of the army. Mediation was offered, which the Greeks accepted and the Turks refused, and in October the Admirals of the three Powers destroyed the Turkish fleet at Navarino. This was really the decisive event, but Canning had died in August 1827; the Duke of Wellington, who soon succeeded him as Prime Minister, frankly regarded the battle as an "untoward event", and we reverted to our earlier policy of not unduly weakening Turkey. Nicholas was therefore left to finish the work by himself and to reap its benefits. After two years of war the Treaty of Adrianople increased Russian rights in the Danubian principalities and established a regrettably small Kingdom of Greece under the suzerainty of the Sultan (1829). Capodistrias had been President of the State while the war lasted, but the new king was to be a European prince. Leopold of Coburg first accepted the crown, but almost at once declined it on the reasonable ground that its territory was insufficient. Otho of Bavaria, having obtained somewhat better terms and complete independence of the Sultan, became King of the Hellenes in 1833.

### *Germany 1815-30*

We have left Germany to the last because, though its internal history was to prove the most important of all for the future of Europe, no very definite events occurred here during this period. It was here perhaps that Metternich secured his greatest triumph, and also made his most serious mistake. The King of Prussia had promised his people a Constitution, and he was a man of his word. Metternich's object, in which he was completely successful, was so to play upon his fears of liberalism that the promise should not be fulfilled: he exploited Frederic William's alarm at a liberal festival held at the Wartburg, in the Duke of Weimar's domain, at which some radical speeches were made, by drawing the moral that this was the inevitable result of the liberal Constitution which the Duke had granted. The failure of other constitutional experiments reinforced his arguments, and so did the example of Alexander, who by 1819 had largely withdrawn from the liberal sentiments of his early years. The final argument was supplied by the foolish murder of a conservative poet and pamphleteer. In

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1819 the Karlsbad Decrees, directed against the universities, the Press and gymnastic associations, proved the completeness of the king's conversion and the success of Metternich.

The other German object which he had at heart was to prevent the German Diet, re-established in 1815, from becoming a reality.\* Here too he was singularly successful, and the Frankfurt Assembly became as impotent as the Diet of the Empire had been: there was no fear of its ever taking the lead in any revolutionary or liberal movement. Here, as we can see, his success was disastrous to the Austrian cause. There was still time for Austria to make herself the effective head of Germany, but Metternich lived too much in the past, and was too faithful to Hapsburg tradition, not to put family claims, especially in Italy, above German responsibility, and the opportunity was lost for ever.

He failed to realise that economic motives were becoming a dominant factor in politics, and took no steps to discourage the formation of the Prussian Customs Union, out of which, rather than out of any more romantic movement, German unity was to grow. The Union was not consciously initiated with any such ambitious purposes: Prussia had acquired a considerable amount of new territory and had a long and broken frontier, so that some form of internal free trade was obviously desirable, and in 1819 the first non-Prussian state was admitted to join in a Zollverein or Customs Union which by 1836 had come to embrace almost the whole of non-Austrian Germany. It was a tie closer and more practical than any which the Diet could exert—but in Metternich's school days economics had formed no part of the curriculum.†

### 1830-48

In July, 1830, Metternich could look with reasonable satisfaction at the result of his labours. It was true that a legitimate king had lost his throne in France, and that a revolutionary movement was prospering in Greece: but, on the other hand, there were solid successes to be reckoned. Absolutism flourished in Spain: Prussia still had no Constitution: Germany was well disciplined: and—what he valued most of all—Italy was firmly held by good

\* It was one very dear to his heart, for, as he once wrote, "the French play with Liberty; it is a more serious matter when the Germans add to enthusiasm perseverance". (Sandeman, *op. cit.*, p. 342.)

† It should be said, however, that he made unsuccessful attempts to induce Austria herself to join the Zollverein.

conservative rulers from the Alps to Sicily. The year was to be for him the beginning of sorrows, and though its immediate problems were speedily and, from his point of view, not unsatisfactorily settled, they initiated a period of unrest which was to increase in intensity till it culminated in his own downfall in 1848, and very nearly in the collapse of Austria, for which, to do him justice, he cared almost as much as for himself.

The major problem which arose in 1830 was caused by the demand of *Belgium* to be released from its union with Holland.

The Belgians, being Roman Catholics, felt (to use a Biblical phrase) that they were "unequally yoked with unbelievers", and the Dutch attitude on other matters did less than nothing to reconcile them to the situation. Their demand, supported by violence, was a direct challenge to the arrangements of 1815, and the King of Holland, who refused all concession, was unquestionably "legitimate", so that it was fortunate that the Tsar Nicholas, that doughty champion of legitimacy, was at the moment occupied with troubles of his own in Poland. England and France agreed to apply the necessary coercion, before which the king unwillingly gave way. Co-operation with the new French Government had difficulties of its own, and it had to be made very clear that we contemplated no general revision of frontiers, but the choice of Leopold of Coburg as King of the Belgians, and his marriage to Louis Philippe's daughter gave general satisfaction: he was enthroned in 1831, and Belgian neutrality guaranteed by the Great Powers. The result was creditable both to Palmerston and Talleyrand.

The rising in *Poland* which had fortunately distracted the Tsar's attention broke out in 1830. Alexander had kept his promise, and given the Poles considerable liberty and the hope of more favours to come; but the Polish Diet refused to co-operate, and its intransigence so discouraged him that from 1820 his concessions were gradually withdrawn. From his successor Nicholas the Poles had nothing to hope, and the rising of 1830 developed into a national revolution. But, as too often in Poland, ill discipline and disunion ruined its chances and courage alone was not enough: the mild protests of England and France only irritated the Tsar, who crushed the rebels and made Poland to all intents and purposes a mere province of Russia.

In *Italy* the risings of 1831 and 1832 in the Papal States gave

little serious trouble. Austria was called in by the Pope (somewhat to the annoyance of France) and "restored order", while some isolated outbreaks in Germany were quickly suppressed: all appeared to be quiet on the Western front. But Metternich was not without his anxieties: the death of the "good Kaiser" Francis in 1835, and the accession of his negligible son, did not weaken his position, but *Hungary* was beginning to give trouble by insisting on her ancient rights, demanding, for instance, that Magyar and not dog-Latin should be used in the debates of its diets. This was clearly objectionable, as emphasising nationality, and a young deputy, called Kossuth, had to be imprisoned in 1836 for presuming to publish the debates in that language.

There was more trouble in Hungary in 1843, and an ugly agrarian rising in Galicia in 1846, but Metternich saw little reason to doubt that the divergent interests of the various races over which Austria ruled would, as in the past, make the world safe for autocracy in Vienna.

Another anxiety came from the side of *Prussia* where Frederic William IV had succeeded his father in 1840: he was an exuberant young man, suspected of liberal sympathies—Croce calls him "the personification of mediaevalising political romanticism"—and would require watching. In 1845 it was seen that the suspicions were warranted, for, announcing in a letter to the Tsar that he wished to "finish the building begun by Papa", he proposed to call a central assembly of the Prussian Diets. Nicholas testily replied that this was something which "Papa" would never have approved, and Metternich issued warnings, but in vain. The United Diet assembled, but his conservative mentors were agreeably surprised, and his liberal supporters profoundly shocked, when he declared in his opening speech that he did not mean "a blotted parchment" to come "between Almighty God in heaven and this land"—or, in other words, that he intended still to reign as an absolute monarch. There we must leave German affairs for the present, noting that here as in Austria there was much combustible material, ready to be fired by the spark from France in 1848. The year 1848 has been called "one of those moments when the historical unity of European life, ordinarily concealed by the conflicts of the various States, leaps to the eye and seems to call for political unity as well". (Croce, *Europe in 19th Century*, ch. VI.) We have to trace its various explosions, and to see how little this call was answered.

*France 1848*

The undistinguished regime of Louis Philippe had begun—most fatal of faults—to bore the French people. It rested entirely on the support of the middle classes: not one in 150 of the citizens had a vote, and the high property qualification excluded all but wealthy men from the Assembly, which has been described as “a club of capitalists”, not unreasonably suspected of corruption. Labour disputes were frequent, and the socialism of Louis Blanc, with its demand for “work for all” was beginning to make a strong appeal: it was becoming clear that the July monarchy had no strong support at home. Abroad, it had at one time seemed that it was gaining strength: its foreign policy (except for a dangerous flirtation with Mehemet Ali) had been pacific, for the king and his advisers were too wise to court war: they had co-operated with England over the Belgian crisis, and in their appeals for Poland: the king had exchanged visits with Queen Victoria: there seemed every prospect of further co-operation on mildly liberal lines. But in 1846 Louis Philippe destroyed these bright prospects by the sordid and discreditable episode of “the Spanish marriages”.\* England therefore was not disturbed when in February 1848, a revolution, mainly engineered by Socialists, broke out in Paris, and limited its sympathy to affording an asylum to Mr. Smith—under which name Louis Philippe escaped to this country.

The new government set up “national workshops” (which soon took the form of paying men to dig holes and again for filling them up), but the elections produced an Assembly of moderate republicans. Fighting was necessary in the capital before the socialists were suppressed, but a new Constitution based on universal suffrage was evolved, with a President to be similarly chosen. The first President, chosen by a vast majority, was Louis Napolcon, son of Louis, King of Holland, whose career belongs to a later stage of our story. 1848 represents a victory of the provinces (in which Communism found no support) over Paris (where it was strong).

*Italy 1848*

The first effect of the Paris revolution was a rising in Milan in March, which expelled the Austrians, and induced Charles Albert,

\* The plan, which was carried out with much secrecy, was to marry Isabella of Spain to a prince known to be unlikely to have children, and her sister and heiress simultaneously to a son of Louis Philippe.

King of Sardinia (Piedmont), to declare war: in the same month Manin drove them out of Venice: risings in Palermo and Naples had taken place in January. It seemed for the moment that Italy was united in her hopes, but those hopes took very different forms—so different as to wreck their course for the time.

There were three main lines of thought among those who dreamt of a united Italy: Mazzini was the inspired prophet of nationality, and his society of Young Italy shared his dreams of an Italian republic, in union, or at least in sympathy, with all the revolutionary forces in Europe. Another party dreamt of Italy united under a reforming Pope, and at this particular moment the dreams seemed to approach fulfilment, for in 1846 Pius IX had been elected Pope, and had embarked on a career of moderate political reform which shone out in contrast to the tyrannical methods of his predecessor. The third party based its hopes on Charles Albert, who had at his disposal a strong army, was known to hate Austria, and was thought (as the event proved, with justice) to be a good Italian.

The first blow to the cause—so far as there ever was a common cause at all—came when Pius declared in April that a war with Austria was “wholly abhorrent to his counsels”, and when the Neapolitan rising collapsed in May. All practical hope now rested on Piedmont, and when Charles Albert granted his kingdom a Constitution the friends of Italy rejoiced: but his generalship was not equal to his good intentions, and in July he was utterly beaten at Custozza and had to accept an armistice.

We may pause to remark that Radetzky’s army which defeated him was largely composed of men whose fellow countrymen were at this very moment engaged, as we shall see, in a bitter struggle for their own domestic rights with Austria—but there was none of that co-operation between revolutionaries which Mazzini had preached, and little sympathy north of the Alps for Italian aspirations. Radetzky’s victory was one of the great strokes which saved absolutism in Austria, and came at a critical moment.

In March 1849, Charles Albert renewed the war, indignant at the savage treatment given to Lombardy. He was again defeated at Novara, and, rather than sign a peace, abdicated in favour of his son Victor Emmanuel. He could have done no greater service to the Italian cause, or to that of the House of Savoy: his tentative policy in earlier years had won him the nickname of *Il re tentenna*, but henceforth he lived in Italian minds as a martyr king, and it



was possible, though not easy, for Italian sentiment to rally round the throne of Piedmont.

Resistance continued only in Rome, from which Pius, repenting of his flirtation with liberalism and shocked by violence, had fled to the sinister protection of the King of Naples. A republic was proclaimed, and Mazzini and Garibaldi rallied the people to its defence. The city was, absurdly enough, attacked and finally taken by a French force which Louis Napoleon, jealous of Austrian pretensions in Italy, and anxious to conciliate clerical sympathy, had sent to restore the Pope. Rome fell in July: the heroism of its defence and Garibaldi's retreat from it form one of the most romantic pages in history. Reaction was dominant everywhere, and in Piedmont alone, weakened as it was, was there any glimmer of hope for the Italian future.

### *Austria 1848*

The revolution of 1848, which began with even greater prospects of success, ended in as complete a failure: by a strange paradox, that characteristic which had always been Austria's weakness, the divergent character of her subjects, proved at this moment her salvation. Though the Magyars in Hungary might loudly assert their own rights, they had no sort of sympathy with any national spirit shown in Croatia or Bohemia. Consequently, though Vienna broke into revolution in March, and Metternich had to fly from the country, though the Hungarians, inspired by Kossuth, declared themselves absolutely independent of what he called "the charnel house of the Viennese system", though Bohemia demanded liberty, though the Croats asserted their rights, though the emperor had to abandon his capital, yet there was no unity of aim between Czech and German, Croat and Magyar: on the contrary, Croat hostility was directed against the Magyars, their immediate overlords. Radetzky's victory at Custozza was followed by military triumphs over the rebels in Vienna and in Buda Pest. The Magyars had missed the opportunity (which perhaps they were temperamentally incapable of taking) of uniting Austria's subject races against her.

Isolated as they were, they made a valiant struggle, but when the Tsar joined Austria against them the war ended in their capitulation in August 1849, and Austria took a terrible vengeance. By this time a strong minister, Schwartzemberg, had come into power, had induced his master to abdicate, and had set the

young Francis Joseph on the throne he was to hold so long. Absolutism was restored in Austria and the Empire seemed, and indeed was, stronger than before.\*

### *Germany 1848*

The triumph of Schwartzenberg had a decisive effect on events in Germany. A Berlin revolution in March had induced or encouraged the King of Prussia to assume the tricolour of a German patriot, and to declare that Prussia was "henceforth merged in Germany". Preparations were made for a German National Assembly which met in May 1848: with characteristic German thoroughness it discussed abstract general principles for four months. The practical problems which called for decision (apart from disputes in Schleswig Holstein which were to trouble a later generation) were Who was to be Head of the German Federation, and with what title? Were non-German states, such as many of those ruled by Austria, to be admitted to equal membership?

It was obvious that these were questions on which Austria would feel strongly, and Schwartzenberg's triumph put him in a very strong position. It was all very well to elect Frederic William as emperor, but to have accepted the offer would have involved him in war with Austria, and he refused it. His form of refusal was to say that he could only accept if all the Governments agreed, and it was true that he had real scruples against receiving a crown as the gift of a popular Assembly.

It soon became clear that Austria and the four kingdoms which acted with her—Saxony, Hanover, Bavaria and Wurtemberg—would never agree to any Federal Union worthy of the name, and the German Parliament came to an inglorious end. A half-hearted attempt by Frederic William to form a Northern league withered under Austrian opposition, and ultimately the Diet of Frankfurt was restored in all its former impotence—another signal victory for the forces of reaction. The aged Metternich, now living as a private citizen in Vienna, must have rejoiced in the restored "stability", though he disapproved of the new friendship with Russia and of the growing hostility shown both to Prussia and to France.

\* It is said that, when Schwartzenberg was asked how he proposed to repay Russia for her help, he replied, "I propose to astonish the world by my ingratitude".

## The Age of Louis Napoleon 1848-70

For the next century the relations of France, Germany and England were to prove of vital importance to Western Europe. This is therefore perhaps the right place for an attempt, necessarily superficial, to analyse their general attitude to one another, now that Germany is, for the first time, to begin to think and act as a nation.

The German character, as hitherto revealed, gave little hint of dangers to come.\* To the average Englishman, Germany was in the main the home of music: Handel's genius had taught him that association of ideas, and the great names of Bach, Beethoven and Schubert, or of the Viennese Mozart (to mention but a few) were enough to confirm his impression, however unmusical he might himself be. He knew, at any rate by hearsay, that Goethe was a very great writer and Kant a very famous philosopher, and, even if he knew no more, felt no inclination to deny that the Germans were a cultured race: but of their political disposition he was entirely ignorant. His conception of the Germans was one of a peaceable people, interested in large problems which they discussed with great prolixity, and, for the rest, contented with pipes and beer and the peaceful pleasures of the simple life.† He had not realised the docility with which the subjects of Frederic the Great had accepted his regimentation, and, if he had, would have seen no reason to expect that a similar docility would be shown by Germans of a very different type: he thought (if he considered such matters at all) that Bavarians and Prussians were never likely to co-operate. He regarded Germany with a friendly interest, but no alarm.

The average Frenchman naturally saw the German in a different light: for centuries there had been fighting on the frontier, and little as the common people may have known of the antagonism of Bourbons and Hapsburgs, they did not forget the part which the Prussians had played at Waterloo or in the subsequent occupation of Paris. They may be forgiven for thinking that

\* Though Cavour had foreseen them many years before.

† The Passion Play at Ober-Ammergau impressed the virtues of the Bavarians on all English people who saw it.

Austerlitz and Jena better represented the respective merits of the French and German soldier. They remembered that German liberty owed much to France, and the cloudiness of German thought made little appeal to the French genius for definiteness and precision. The antagonism of many centuries was not easily forgotten.

For England also the average Frenchman felt little liking: here, too, there was the memory of long years of war, and the respective virtues of the two countries made little appeal across the Channel. Though French clarity of thought and language were highly appreciated in England—as they have always been by men of taste—the ordinary man in both countries neither liked nor appreciated his neighbour. If the average Frenchman thought us extravagant in action and careless in speech, we thought his thrift to be meanness and his care for accuracy pedantic. If we accused him of loose living (as we were inclined to do) he retaliated by accusing us of loose thinking—to him a more serious offence: the “national genius for compromise”, on which we prided ourselves, seemed to him to be the exaltation of a vice into a virtue. We tended to think him avaricious and hard-hearted, and he retorted that, while we were quite as selfish, we were too hypocritical to confess it, and too sentimental to face realities. Napoleon once described the Italians as “un peuple foncièrement ennemi des français, par préjugés, par l’habitude des siècles, par caractère”: it is to be feared that, so far as the average Englishman is concerned, this verdict might be passed on us. This mutual antipathy of England and France is perhaps the first national sentiment of the kind, for Italy and Germany had as yet no national feeling, and the French attitude to Spain and the Empire was mainly dynastic.

This fundamental difference of outlook, the merits of which we need not attempt to decide, explains why our influence on one another, though at times considerable, has never, since early days, been more than superficial.

In the political history of Europe, with which we are more particularly concerned, France has played a curious part: twice, in the early Middle Ages and at the time of her Revolution, she has been its inspiration: twice she has nearly dominated it by force; but for the last hundred years she has been an erratic body, trying out with indifferent success ideas of which others have made more profitable use. Too logical to adapt herself to the inevitable

absurdities of party government; too cynical to trust the statesmen she has or to insist on replacing them by better men; impatient of control, yet longing for a master and unable to discover one; more constant in her hates than in her friendships; in her eternal dissatisfaction, an explosive factor in European politics; easily elated by success but resilient after defeat—such is the France which Europe for a century has known, and may yet know again. Her experiment with Louis Napoleon is characteristic rather of her weakness than of her strength, and that experiment we must now consider.

In a sense similar to that in which we spoke of the Age of Metternich, we may call these years the Age of Louis Napoleon. Though he was very far from enforcing a policy on other nations, and, indeed, had no settled policy of his own, yet for nearly a quarter of a century he kept Europe on tenterhooks, doubtful what his next move would be, and with all the more success because he seldom knew the answer himself.

He gave France the assurance she needed, that she counted for much in the councils of Europe: his name seemed to promise her that military glory which she had always craved, and an Imperial court, however shoddy, was at least more entertaining than the drab regime of a "citizen king". He himself is a strange figure: no one without courage, perseverance, and a real belief in his destiny could have risen so high, and the story of his early years can be read with interest and sympathy. But the great name which had been his inspiration was to prove his ruin: he was fated to be Napoleon the Little, and a little Napoleon is a contradiction in terms. Too clever not at times to suspect this, too sensitive to enjoy the wars which as a Napoleon he had to fight; not ruthless enough for a tyrant, not honest enough for a constitutional king; too sanguine alike in diplomacy and in war; tortured at times by conscience and in his later years by disease, he might have supplied a later Johnson with another illustration of the Vanity of Human Wishes. But there were gleams of generosity in him and he had some ambitions which were not unworthy: for the disasters which he brought upon France, the nation which exalted him to a position so far above his character and his capacity cannot evade some share of the responsibility: she was either his dupe or his accomplice, and neither thought is gratifying to the national pride.

We take his career as the connecting thread for these years,

because he was closely concerned with all the great events of the time—the Crimean War, the war which freed Italy, the war which ended Austria's career as a German power, and that which made Prussia an Imperial state. It is the age of the unscrupulous statesman: Louis Napoleon was no more unscrupulous a diplomatist than Bismarck or Cavour, but they succeeded while he failed, and history is never kind to "Saviours of Society" who fail to save.

### *The Crimean War*

Louis Napoleon, cleverly playing on the middle-class fear of socialism and the indignation of 3,000,000 Frenchmen whom the Assembly had disfranchised, succeeded by December 1852, in getting himself chosen emperor. The *coup d'état* by which he defeated his opponents in the year before was no more unscrupulous, and appreciably less bloody, than is usual with such enterprises: France endorsed his elevation with practical unanimity and the courts of Europe accepted the *fait accompli*.

There was one exception, the Tsar Nicholas, who refused to regard the new emperor as a "brother" and preferred to address him as "my friend". This added some acidity to the dispute which arose between Russia and France as Protectors respectively of Roman Catholic and Orthodox claims on the Holy Places in Jerusalem, a dispute which gradually merged in the larger question of the Tsar's position as Protector of the Christians under Turkish rule, the vast majority of whom belonged to the Orthodox Church.

It was perfectly obvious that if he did not protect their interests no one else would, and it might have been supposed that England, a country priding herself, perhaps excessively, on her interest in oppressed peoples, would have welcomed the arrangement, but England was at the moment in one of those moods of blind suspicion which have at times obscured her judgment where Russia is concerned.

It is impossible not to feel some sympathy with Nicholas who, though an autocrat, was an honest man, perhaps too honest for his own interests. When he suggested that Turkey was "a sick man", and that it would be wise to make plans for the future, he was quite sincere in hoping for English co-operation. But England was annoyed at his rejection of her pleas for Poland, and at his attempts to induce the Sultan to surrender Hungarian refugees, and

came to see in him nothing but a designing despot. This involved the absurd doctrine that Turkey was a civilised and well-governed country, a belief utterly at variance with the known facts. On these two assumptions we drifted into a war, with France as our ally (1854-56), and as a result of our success the Turkish yoke was fastened more firmly on her Christian subjects, while Russia, disappointed of her not unreasonable hopes in Europe, was encouraged to turn her attention to Asia—the last result which we desired.

But our soldiers did not die altogether in vain: besides the heroic memories of Balaclava and Inkermann, they, by their appalling sufferings in the Crimea, gave to Florence Nightingale and Sidney Herbert those opportunities of reform which they so nobly took. But the Crimean War reflected no credit on British statesmanship: the one territorial change which it produced was the creation of the Kingdom of Roumania in 1866, against which we had strenuously contended.\*

But the war—the last war to be fought with weapons and transport unaffected by modern mechanical inventions—had very important repercussions. It was a comparatively small thing that we and the French emerged from it less friendly than before: what was really important for Europe was that Austria (pursuing Schwartzemberg's policy of "ingratitude") forfeited the friendship of Russia by taking sides against her. As Prussia, partly from dislike of Louis Napoleon and partly from old friendship with Tsar, remained strictly neutral, it was clear that Austria, if trouble came on her again, either from the South or from the North, would look in vain for Russian support—and both these troubles were soon to come.†

It was on Piedmont, as we have seen, that the hopes of Italian unity now rested, and Cavour's object in declaring war was purely Italian: by his action he secured for Piedmont a place in the peace negotiations, and took the opportunity thus given of pointing out that the continued unrest in Italy was a danger to Europe, for which the responsibility lay with Austria (1856). England was sympathetic but unprepared to act: Louis Napoleon, who had a real personal interest in Italy and had indeed coquetted with the Carbonari in his youth, saw the opportunity for one of those large schemes for reconstructing Europe which appealed to him and caused other countries to view him with alarm. He wished to strike a blow for Italy which would be a heroic act, worthy of the best traditions, to strengthen French influence there, and incidentally to improve his own frontier. It was not unreasonable that he should wish to regain Savoy, which was largely French in sympathy and had been in French hands from 1795 to 1815.

There were clearly opportunities for a bargain, which Cavour hastened to exploit. He met Louis Napoleon in 1858, and the agreement was made that France would come to the help of Piedmont if the declaration of war could be made to come from the Austrian side. This, by extremely clever manoeuvring, Cavour accomplished in 1859. The French entered Italy, and the battles of Magenta and Solferino in June were real but expensive victories, but in July Louis Napoleon, alarmed by the danger of Prussian attack across the Rhine, agreed to an armistice at Villa Franca, and that without consulting Victor Emmanuel.

The danger was certainly very real: Prussia was not in the least moved by sympathy with Austria but by a genuine distrust of French ambition—one is not called Napoleon for nothing—and it is hard to blame the emperor for being unwilling to face it.\* But the blow to Italy was terrible, all the greater for coming in the hour of success. Cavour for once lost his nerve and retired into private life, leaving the king to retrieve the situation. As a few months were to show, a great deal had been gained: Lombardy was ceded to Piedmont by the terms of the armistice, and when next year Romagna, Bologna, Modena and Tuscany also expressed by plebiscite their desire to join her, Louis Napoleon, himself the creature of a plebiscite, could not reasonably object. He demanded his price, Savoy and Nice, and it can hardly be

\* But it should be added that he was also influenced by the danger of Tuscany joining Piedmont, which did not suit his plans.



denied that he had earned it. He had done much for Italy, but it was his ill fortune that while he earned little gratitude from her, he had for her sake antagonised Austria and awakened the suspicions of Prussia.

Cavour came back to office to finish the work which had been so well begun: all the world knows of the romantic campaign of Garibaldi and the Thousand, how they conquered Sicily and fought their way up to Naples and beyond it; and how by the end of the year all Italy except Venetia and Rome was united under the House of Savoy: but Garibaldi's glorious exploits would have availed nothing but for the prodigies of tactful dissimulation which were performed by Cavour. His task was extremely difficult, for Garibaldi detested all statesmen (and Cavour himself most of all) and despised all kings (with the fortunate exception of King Victor Emmanuel): to have secured their co-operation was indeed a triumph.

"The Government of the World is a Great Thing, but it is a very coarse one too." Without embarking on the abstract question whether the end can ever justify the means, we may record that it has been generally felt—certainly in this country—that the Union of Italy was a cause great enough to justify the long duplicity of Cavour, whose personal character was irreproachable, and whose political creed was an enlightened liberalism: he confessed himself that if he had done for personal reasons what he had done for Italy he would have been a sorry scoundrel. There can be no doubt that the movement which he guided to success was animated by a real, unselfish and romantic patriotism. Even if the history of United Italy has failed as yet to justify the high hopes which its foundation inspired, it will remain true that the removal of the Austrian tyranny in North and South was an unmixed blessing, and gave the Italians, so long the victims of foreign ambition, the chance of a free national life.

### *Germany and Austria*

We have now to turn to another movement which similarly won the applause of the nineteenth century, the creation of the German Empire, and to ask whether the achievement of Bismarck, effected with similar concentration of purpose and an equal disregard of scruple, deserves the admiration of the world. It is a subject difficult to approach without prejudice, but we can at least put on record that, from a purely political point of view, the elimination

of Austria from the German national life, to which she had for centuries been a hindrance not a help, was a desirable thing, and that Bismarck, both as a Prussian and a German, was right to make that his first object.\*

With regard to the union of Germany, which he effected, we may reasonably regret that it had to be brought about not by one who, like Cavour, had a profound and mystical belief in the character of his nation, but by a statesman whose creed was "blood and iron"—by the ruthless efficiency of a Tory rather than by the practical sagacity of a Liberal. And if the nineteenth century seems to us to have been foolishly optimistic, we should remember that it was not unreasonable to hope that the unquestioned virtues of the German race would, given a fair field, produce a national life from which all Europe would benefit: there was every reason to believe that Prussia would dominate her politics, but none, as yet, to fear that she would corrupt her soul.

Following our usual course, we will first look at the Austro-Prussian struggle as it concerned Louis Napoleon. His first ten years of rule had on the whole been years of success: he had now entered on the second decade, which was to end in complete catastrophe. The early sixties were ominous: he had "lost face" by his abortive intercession on behalf of Poland: he had involved himself in establishing an empire in Mexico which was doomed to ignominious collapse as soon as the end of the North and South war (1865) left the United States at liberty to attend to it: † he had no sure friends in Europe, for the clerical interest in France refused to allow him to remove the French troops from Rome, an act which might have given him Italy as an ally. His only security lay in the continued disunion of Germany, and hopes based on that would not have been unreasonable but for the emergence of the amazing personality of Bismarck.

Bismarck was called to power in 1861 by the new king, William I, who was determined, against the wishes of his Parliament, greatly to strengthen the Prussian Army: so began that momentous partnership which lasted for a quarter of a century.

\* This is not to deny the contribution which Austria had made to German life as a home of culture, and of art, and as representing a refinement not found in other German states.

† The Monroe doctrine, warning Europe to keep its hands off America, had been published in 1823: as Mr. Lippmann has pointed out, it tacitly assumed the support of British sea power which we had no disposition to use on behalf of Louis Napoleon. (W. Lippmann, *U.S. Foreign Policy*.)

Bismarck served Prussia with single-minded but conscienceless devotion; from the first he set a wider task before him to which a strengthened army was but a step—a very necessary step, for, as he warned his hearers from the first, "Questions of Right (Rechtsfragen) in the long run become Questions of Might (Machtsfragen)". Machiavelli's doctrine had found a competent exponent.

The first task which he set before him was the complete elimination of Austria from German affairs: he did not intend that "the smart and seaworthy Prussian frigate should tow in perpetuity the waterlogged and dry-rotted Austrian battleship". In this task he could look for little support from German feeling, which had sympathised with Austria's disasters in Italy, especially since they had induced her to adopt a more liberal policy at home. Prussian liberal sentiment, which was strong, was bitterly hostile to him, and for four years the king and he had to work without a Parliament and with a muzzled Press, the one steadily reorganising his army, with no specific purpose in mind, the other steadily manoeuvring to isolate his enemy.

For this purpose he cultivated the friendship of Russia, with all the more readiness and success because he had not the faintest sympathy with those Polish national aspirations which the Tsar was busily repressing: he negotiated with Italy, and by 1866 had made an alliance on terms that if Prussia declared war "to secure a reform of the Diet" Piedmont would altruistically attack Austria, and hope to be rewarded with Venetia. Finally, he interviewed Louis Napoleon and left him under the impression that his neutrality in the coming struggle would not be without a reward. The emperor (who was singularly ill-informed on military matters) was convinced of an Austrian victory, and hoped to be able to intervene as mediator with both dignity and profit.

While these external preparations were in progress, Bismarck was equally concerned with the Diet of Frankfurt, the reform of which was nominally his object. That the Diet, an incredibly ineffective body, greatly needed reform was unquestionable, but neither its inefficient members, nor those devotees of German unity who still hoped something from it, as yet realised Bismarck's purpose to replace it by a Federation dominated by Prussia, and that was not a purpose which he could divulge. What he hoped was to demonstrate its futility, to embroil it, if possible, with Austria, and to reveal the superior competence of the Prussian

state. All this he brilliantly accomplished by manoeuvres centred round the Danish Duchies of Schleswig-Holstein.

Lord Palmerston, it is recorded, once said that there were only two people besides himself completely familiar with the Schleswig-Holstein problem—the Prince Consort who was dead, and a German professor who was in an asylum—and that he himself had forgotten the answer. The essential facts are that many of its inhabitants were rather German than Danish, that Kiel provided an admirable harbour, that Bismarck succeeded in persuading Austria to act with Prussia rather than with the Diet in settling the matter, and that she did not discover that she had been tricked until Prussia had secured for herself all that she required.\*

War was begun on June 15th, 1866, and ended on July 3rd at Königgratz (Sadowa) where the strength of the Prussian army, the excellence of its leadership, and the merits of the new breech-loading rifle were unmistakably demonstrated to the world. Austria agreed to withdraw from German affairs, and to recognise a North German Federation which, including Saxony, should be constituted under Prussian leadership, and that Venetia should be surrendered to Piedmont. There was clearly no room for Napoleon's mediation: he hoped that the southern German states would federate and look to France for support, but when Bismarck published the suggestions which France had made for "compensation" at German expense their patriotism was roused and the desire for German unity increased.

### *Germany and France 1870*

Bismarck's first task was triumphantly performed: he became in a moment a national hero: his offences against liberalism were forgotten: he apologised for his autocratic rule and applied for an Act of Indemnity. When he agreed that the North German Federation must have a Parliament elected by the people, and took every step to win over the people of Hanover to their new allegiance, he became the hero of the National Liberal party, and his old Tory associates wept over him as a renegade.

They need have had no fear: Bismarck cared no more for the cause of Germany, and no more for doctrinaires, than he had

\* England and France protested feebly on the Danish behalf, and we encouraged them to hope for help which we could not give, having apparently forgotten that we had a navy. It is not altogether surprising that Bismarck once remarked, "I wasted several years of my life by the supposition that England was a great nation". (Robertson, *Bismarck*, p. 173.)

always done: he valued German unity simply as the instrument of Prussian power. Consequently, when in due course the German Empire came into being, it represented his autocratic ideas: he could have given Germany responsible parliamentary government when the Federation was first formed, but he wished only for a Parliament such as that of Tudor days—"a perpetual Royal Commission to lay the wishes of the nation at the foot of the throne"—and all the powers of a representative body must be sternly checked and circumscribed (Robertson, *Bismarck*, pp. 232 ff.). It is thanks to him that the German people have never had any real education in political life. Those who deplore this result will find some satisfaction in the thought that he was in the end destroyed by his own creation. He established an Imperial autocracy to be guided by a Chancellor who was to be to the monarch what the Mayors of the Palace had been to the Merovingian kings: this worked admirably while his old master lived, and Providence seemed to play into his hands when his successor Frederic, who dreamt of a liberal Empire, died after a three-months' reign (1888): but a young autocrat, before whom vast possibilities lay open, felt no need of an aged mentor, and "the pilot was dropped" (1890) to watch for eight years with increasing disfavour a policy very different from his own.

The story of the war of 1870 need hardly be told again. Louis Napoleon made every mistake possible to a sick and sanguine man: he made suggestions for the cession of Luxemburg or Belgium which alienated the public opinion of Europe: he negotiated with Austria and Italy, hoping for their intervention on his side as soon as the French Army had gained its initial victories: but he took no step to secure that the French armies were capable of winning them. As all the world knows, French military organisation broke down as completely as French generalship, and the surrender of Sedan (September 1st) meant the fall of the French Empire.

On the German side no mistakes were made: the brilliant adaptation of the Ems telegram, making the provocation appear to come from France, was followed up by generalship as brilliant, and the same epithet applies to the negotiations which induced the King of Bavaria (of a prouder family than the Hohenzollerns) himself to propose that William should become the German Emperor. Bismarck's task was done: "blood" had played its part, and though "iron" was to remain a feature of his policy he was not

wrong in describing himself henceforth as a "*Friedensfanatiker*", a fanatic for peace, provided it was a peace which rested on the armed strength of the German state.

The catastrophe of Sedan did not mean the end of French resistance. Paris, on which Moltke determined to march, held out for nearly five months: Gambetta, escaping thence in a balloon to join the Government on the Loire, organised resistance throughout France, and raised 800,000 men: as Bazaine still had 200,000 in Metz the situation was not entirely hopeless: but he showed the same supineness or treachery which had contributed to the disaster of Sedan, and surrendered on October 27. Fighting, not wholly unsuccessful, went on for several months, but even Gambetta's tireless energy could not compensate for the lack of equipment, and the end really came when Paris asked for an armistice on January 28th, 1871, after its last sortie and the last effort to relieve it had failed. The old Thiers, who had had much to do both with the rise and the fall of Louis Philippe, was called to the Government to make the best terms he could.\* He had to surrender Alsace and Lorraine, but saved Belfort by agreeing that German troops might occupy the Champs-Élysées for two days. A large indemnity (which was raised with surprising speed) was to be paid within three years.

A by-product of this war was the Italian occupation of Rome, from which the French garrison was inevitably withdrawn: Florence ceased to be the capital of Italy. The Pope, though allowed sovereign rights in the Vatican City and offered a large annual revenue, refused to recognise the Italian Government, and was to remain nominally "the prisoner of the Vatican" for half a century.

### *Russia and Poland 1855-70*

We left Poland in 1830 (see p. 341) reduced to the level of a Russian province: no change could be expected so long as the Tsar Nicholas lived, but his son Alexander II, who reigned from 1855 to 1881, was both humane and well-meaning though<sup>1</sup> cursed with a hopeless infirmity of purpose. These qualities were shown in the emancipation of the Russian serfs in 1861, "the greatest act of legislation of modern times" (Fyffe, III, 331) by which

\* It was appropriate that Thiers, whose puffing of "the Napoleonic legend" of Bonaparte had had such an effect in exciting the clamour for war, should have been called upon to settle the bill.

25,000,000 serfs became free landowners—but in the very month in which his great act of liberation was accomplished, Alexander dismissed the two ministers on whose advice he had mainly relied.

With regard to Poland his policy was equally vacillating: he tried conciliation, and was ready to restore some self-government, but was irritated by the opposition of the Polish nobles, and finally ruined his schemes by a decree applying conscription drastically to the towns where the patriots were mainly to be found. The result was an insurrection which spread through the whole country, brutally suppressed in a year's time (1864). England and France protested, as usual, but Louis Napoleon was at the moment preoccupied with Mexico, and Austria, after some hesitation, decided that it was less dangerous to let Russia have her way than to encourage a national spirit from which she herself had so much to fear. Prussia took the Tsar's side, and gained his friendship: England received a rebuff, and Louis Napoleon, besides the blow to his prestige, lost credit with this country as a feeble ally.

Alexander, seeing no hope of conciliating the Polish nobles, decided to try to win the gratitude of the peasants, and in 1864 (calling back the advisers he had dismissed) emancipated the Polish serfs on terms much more favourable than those he had given in Russia. But this generous agrarian policy was accompanied by a determined effort to stamp out Polish nationality and to make the Poles Russian in thought, sentiment and expression.

Though it is clear that there was much in Alexander's policy which no liberal nation could approve, it is unfortunate that then, as in later days, our fear of the "Russian menace" forbade us to see any merits in an autocracy. Then, as later, Russia was a bogey. Our opinions might, at both times, have carried more weight had they not been those of a definitely hostile and suspicious power.

### *England 1815-70*

As, during these years, England does not (except for the Crimean war) appear as a principal on the European stage, it has seemed better to postpone the treatment of her affairs, and, for the same reason, interesting to us as her domestic annals are, we cannot afford the space to deal with them in any detail.

The self-complacency of the nineteenth century in England has caused its successor to be less than just to its achievements. In the material field these are obvious, and explain its comfortable, though unreasoned, belief in Progress as an inevitable and beneficent process. The passing of the Reform Bill of 1832, was a great landmark on the road, and it is interesting to note, that, as the French Revolution of 1793 had shelved the question of Reform, so the French Revolution of 1830 undoubtedly assisted in its revival. The extravagant expectations which its passing aroused \* may seem to us a curious effect of a Bill which, in fact, "divided political power between half the middle class and all the landlords" (Trevelyan, p. 635), but the abolition of rotten boroughs was a real step forward; and the rest of the century was to show that the national instinct was right in denying to the Reform Bill, as a political settlement, that "finality" by claiming which Lord John Russell earned the name of "Finality Jack".

But we should not forget that there was real and definite progress in the moral field also. In twenty years after the passing of the Reform Bill politics and the civil service were completely purified—a feat accomplished by no other great country except Germany (Oliver, *op. cit.*, III, 171). Anyone who studies the social conditions of the country in the early years of the century will realise that an entirely new attitude was needed towards the condition of the poor. Whether we look at housing or education, at prisons, asylums or hospitals, at labour conditions or at the criminal law, or even at official religion, we see a state of things which seems to us incredible, and our incredulity is the measure of the change accomplished.

This is not the place to describe it in detail, but to study, for example, the career of the great Lord Shaftesbury is to learn something of the slow and difficult awakening of the national conscience: the Two Nations—rich and poor—were still to live side by side (as Disraeli reminded the country) but not, after the 'forties, with entire incomprehension or an utter lack of sympathy.

In a history of Europe we have only space to consider the British reaction to the two great ideas of liberty and nationality

\* "All young ladies", said Sydney Smith, "expect that, as soon as this Bill is carried, they will be instantly married: schoolboys believe that gerunds and supines will be abolished, and that currant tarts must ultimately come down in price; the corporal and vergant are sure of double pay; bad poets expect a demand for their verses; and fools will be disappointed, as they always are."



which the French Revolution had set to work in Europe: in both cases our reaction was characteristic.

It had been a surprise to the French that their offers of fraternal sympathy to the oppressed met with so lukewarm a response in this country. There were plenty of "oppressed" in England: the Enclosure Acts, which had greatly benefited the nation's agriculture, had left its peasants landless and hopeless: \* Parliamentary representation was denied to the rising towns, and, indeed, to the vast majority of the population: the right to "combine" was denied to the working man: and legislation, very harsh by English, though not by Continental, standards, was passed to repress any opinion hostile to the Government. The material for Revolution seemed to be provided.

What saved the country was, first, its very real conviction that the French had nothing better to offer, passing into a belief that Nápoleon was the enemy of mankind and in particular of England; and, secondly, the fact that the Government, harsh as its measures were, was not in fact a government of tyrants. Its measures were measures of panic, but the panic was as much the country's as its own.

To us it seems obvious that good and sympathetic government could hardly be expected from a House of Commons in which a majority of the seats was controlled by little more than 150 borough-mongers, but Sir Francis Burdett found only a handful of members to agree with him when he denounced "the system" and the waste of public money on sinecures which were indistinguishable from bribes. For many years he ploughed a lonely furrow, fulminating against the corruption of Whig and Tory alike and his repeated election for Westminster, which he represented from 1807-37, was in itself something of a portent.† The Whigs, as a party, showed little interest in Reform till 1820.

A great change in Home affairs came when Peel in that year succeeded Sidmouth (Addington) at the Home Office, and the

\* Our national self-complacency should not cause us to forget that the growth in national prosperity since Tudor days, while enriching the gentry and the middle classes, had left the poor relatively far poorer than before. (Hollis, *The Two Nations*, p. 46.)

† Sir Francis Burdett, that wealthy, generous, volatile and warm-hearted baronet, has received less credit than he deserves—and much less than he would have received if he had been an orthodox party man. "There is", said Hazlitt, "no honest cause which he dares not avow: no oppressed individual that he is not forward to succour." Beginning life as a Radical, though never a Revolutionary, and ending as a friend of the young Disraeli, this "plain, unsophisticated, English gentleman" has the right to an honoured place among Reformers, and was perhaps the original Tory democrat.

events of the next ten years, which we have no space to describe in detail, showed that even Tory governments were beginning to respond to liberal ideas. The disappearance of the Combination Acts in 1824, the grant of Catholic Emancipation by a Tory ministry in 1829, and the passing of Grey's Reform Bill of 1832, showed that even an unreformed Parliament could, however unwillingly, respond to public opinion. Though the Reform Bill only enfranchised half the middle class and none of the class below, it was rightly accepted as a great advance, so that when, in 1848, the year of Revolution abroad, the Chartists demanded more democratic changes, the nation as a whole regarded them as quite unreasonable—though most of them have been conceded since.

But the Victorian age is the age of Victoria and, with all their obvious limitations, neither need be ashamed of the other. When the queen took the crown, prophets were declaring that she would be the last to wear it: when she died, "the golden link of the crown" had become a commonplace: it is the measure of her achievement that these facts are commonly forgotten.

Her success owed much to the Prince Consort, who steadied her character and taught her to reconcile her strong personal feelings with the duties of a constitutional sovereign: between them they made monarchy "respectable", in the proper sense of that much-abused word. No doubt the length of her reign contributed to her triumph, but mere length of days does not bring honour unless the ruler has a real devotion to the country and is in a true sense representative of some of its deepest instincts. Both these qualities, to our lasting benefit, were present in Queen Victoria.

Freedom in England, as Tennyson has observed, "broadens slowly down from precedent to precedent", in a way irritating and bewildering to more logical nations. It is characteristic of English political life that it was Canning, a Tory Prime Minister, who was the boldest opponent of autocracy abroad: that it was a Tory government, led by the Duke of Wellington, which carried Catholic emancipation; that it was Peel, another Tory, who repealed the Corn Laws, a step which marked the triumph of town over country, of the middle class over the landlords: when it is added that Palmerston and Gladstone, the most distinguished of Liberal Prime Ministers, both began life as Tories; that the ardent reformer, Lord John Russell, described the 1832 settlement as "final", and that the Conservative Disraeli carried the Reform Bill of 1867 (after rejecting a less generous Liberal pro-

posal) it will be seen that the party system in England works with a flexibility which may well appear unprincipled.\*

But the real interest of the period lay not in politics, but in social and industrial affairs. For nearly a century after Watt's discovery of the steam engine in 1765 a ceaseless course of industrial invention had revolutionised English life and habits in town and country alike. The agricultural labourer, deprived of his land by the Enclosure Acts (5,000,000 acres were enclosed between 1760 and 1810) and shamefully ill-paid, saw a menace to employment in threshing machines, and his pitiful revolt in 1830, a protest against the results of progress, was savagely repressed. It was indeed a time of great prosperity and needless hardship, accentuated by the eighteenth-century doctrine that a government's first duty was to abstain from action. This doctrine was gradually broken down, though not without resistance from the believers in "liberty", and the first Factory Act (1833) and the limitations of child labour (due to Lord Shaftesbury) were the beginning of a new conception of a government's obligation. "Humanity", said Sydney Smith, writing of child chimney sweeps in 1819, "is a modern invention." The slums have been the most disastrous legacy of the period, for, though public health began to arouse interest in 1844, we have been slow to see that the re-housing of the people was its first essential condition. Education, long seriously tackled only by religious bodies at their own expense, first became recognised as a national concern in Mr. Gladstone's great ministry of 1868. It was an interesting reversal of tradition that it was the Liberals who were beginning to press for restrictions on a liberty which was, from the nation's point of view, misused: the Free Trade movement which swept the country in the 'forties was based on an almost Gallic belief in human altruism, and might not have long survived in England but for the fact that at the moment it clearly coincided with English interests.

With so much to occupy us at home—and it has been impossible even to mention most of the industrial movements in which we led

\* The difference between Liberals and Conservatives—the name Tory has for a century been an abusive anachronism—is rather one of temperament than of principle or programme. Mr. Bonar Law once startled a Conservative meeting by saying (though in more diplomatic language) that while they had all the stupid people on their side the Liberals had all the cranks, and the real opposition is between the Right and Left wings of the opposing party. The Conservative party may come to feel that "liberty" is what most needs "conserving" and extremists of the Liberal party to demand more State action, just as the Democratic party in America, once the champion of State Rights, has been led to support extreme centralisation in Washington.

the world—it is not surprising that our foreign policy was both tentative and complacent. It was perhaps fortunate for us that we were not brought into closer contact with the second problem which the French Revolution had raised (that of nationality), for our own handling of that problem in Ireland was feeble in the extreme and was to bring us serious trouble before the century ended. As far as Europe was concerned, we were faithful to our general preference for free governments as against autocracies, and as ready as we have always been to offer good advice without being prepared to back it up by vigorous action: the Liberal party was always ready (sometimes a little too ready) to assume that any rising against an existing government was one of “patriots rightly struggling to be free”. In this respect Palmerston’s readiness to prescribe for other countries flattered the nation’s taste, and, as we have seen, we acted successfully in the affairs of Greece and Belgium: in those of Italy our sympathies were strongly anti-Austrian, and our attitude influenced that of France: our protests in favour of Poland relieved our conscience, but in the case of Denmark and Schleswig-Holstein their only effect was to deceive our friends. The Crimean War was creditable neither to our diplomacy nor to our readiness to support it in arms, and our foreign policy in general was marked mainly by a desire to maintain peace, with no very clear idea of the quarter from which it was threatened. Mr. Gladstone, at the height of his power in 1870, was as characteristic of English aspirations as Bismarck was of those of Germany. After 1870, with the rise of Germany England’s position was weakened, though it was only by degrees that she came to realise the fact.

For a generation after the passing of the Reform Bill party politics in England were in a fluid state. There was a general agreement in “the most unbounded veneration for the system of government by parties” and a concurrence in “the orthodox belief that two sets of gentlemen squabbling for place are the only sure bulwark of our freedom”: but the parties themselves were ill-defined and factious, and in the ’fifties, for instance, much parliamentary time was devoted “to the settlement of the interesting question whether Lord Palmerston was or was not a more important man than Lord John Russell”.\*

\* The quotations are from an article by Lord Robert Cecil, later Marquess of Salisbury.

## The Last Years of the Nineteenth Century

*France 1870-1900*

As soon as the war with Prussia was over, France was distracted by the Commune—a movement which was really international and aimed at destroying the centralised state and substituting a “political unity based on the voluntary association of all local initiative”, or, in other words, a federation of municipalities. Its home was Paris, where it was not suppressed till 80,000 citizens had lost their lives.

The Assembly was mainly monarchical, and if the Comte de Chambord, the legitimist candidate, had been willing to exchange the white flag of the Bourbons for the tricolour, he would probably have been called to the throne; but this with hereditary obstinacy he refused to do. Marshal MacMahon, who had succeeded Thiers as President, was himself a monarchist, but it was in his Presidency that the Third Republic was established in 1875 by a single vote (Grant and Temperley, p. 362). In 1879 he resigned and France had a really republican President (Grévy) in heart as well as in name.

His Presidency saw the French in occupation of Tunis and Madagascar and beginning to look still further afield. Until 1882 France and Britain established a dual control over Egypt, but in that year France refused to co-operate in suppressing an attempt at military dictatorship. Britain had to act alone, and thereby “acquired Egypt in a fit of absence of mind and with it the extreme enmity of France” (*ibid.*, p. 402), which endured till 1904.\*

The period after the war shows not for the first, and perhaps not for the last, time the resilience of France after disaster. To recover Alsace and Lorraine was the dream of the patriots, though Gambetta, the fiery Southerner who had once been their inspiration, was beguiled by Bismarck's support for the Republic and came to dream that the recovery could be accomplished by other means than war: others came to put their trust in a possible

\* The Sudan was reconquered by Kitchener in 1898 in the name of the Khedive and the queen, after the revolt of the Mahdi had led to its loss and the death of Gordon in Khartoum thirteen years before.

alliance with Russia, though none could foresee the events which were to lead to the Treaty of Versailles.

### *England 1870-1900*

It was only in the closing years of this period that the Liberal and Conservative parties assumed their modern shape, and it is not entirely fanciful to suggest that they were permanently influenced by their great leaders, Gladstone and Disraeli. It was as natural (and as true) to describe Mr. Gladstone as "good" as it was to speak of Mr. Disraeli as "clever", though this is by no means to attribute a lack of astuteness to the one, or a lack of moral principle to the other: Gladstone's appeal was to the conscience, so that every political problem raised a moral issue, while Disraeli, breathing a less exalted atmosphere, was more ready to appeal to expediency and common sense. Since their day, fidelity to a principle once accepted has been as characteristic of the typical Liberal, as a shrewd adaptability to changing conditions has been of the typical Conservative: Liberals, we may say, are wedded to their principles as Christian polygamists, with no machinery for discarding those whose attractions have waned, while Conservative alliances contracted, so to speak, in a Registry Office, are more easily dissoluble at the pleasure of the State.

In home affairs, Gladstone quickened the pace of reform between 1868-74, and the Conservatives paid him the flattery of imitation: abroad, he was not at his best, nor was Disraeli, perhaps, quite as successful as he liked to believe: neither party showed any appreciation of the Colonies and their possibilities: Disraeli, it is true, was at one time anxious to see them represented in the Imperial Parliament, but he is better (though less justly) remembered for a petulant remark in a private letter referring to the "wretched Colonies" as "a millstone round our necks": with the Liberals there was a real risk of their distaste being raised to the dangerous level of a Principle.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, that age of peace and prosperity, England was able, as it were, to sit back and realise what the centuries had brought her. The spectacle might (and did) encourage complacency: she had at the beginning of the century emerged triumphant from a great and glorious war, and could feel that she had saved Europe from France for the second time: her industries led the world: her dominions beyond the seas were immense. She might flatter herself that she had

settled her domestic problems without Revolution, with the same good sense by which she had avoided religious wars three centuries before. She might well say, with the poet who hailed the accession of Edward VII:

Time, and the ocean, and some fostering star,  
In high cabal have made us what we are.

No doubt there were some shadows on the picture, but they were easy to forget, and the English capacity for forgetting unpleasant truths amounts to genius. It was easy, for instance, to forget that the sailors who had won our victories against Napoleon had been recruited by the press-gang, "fed on mouldy bread and lumps of rusty pork", and shamefully ill paid till they mutinied for better treatment: it was still easier to forget the army, to which, ever since the days of Cromwell, we had been consistently and shamefully unjust in times of peace: or the condition of the poor, though Ruskin, William Morris and Disraeli, among others, had called our attention to its scandals and its dangers: nor, in spite of Mr. Gladstone's efforts, did we remember our long and discreditable record in Ireland with sufficient clearness to seek earnestly for a remedy. In the eighties of this century (as a hundred years before (see p. 307)) there seemed a real hope that the Irish question might be solved on a permanent and honourable basis, but the fatality which presides over Irish affairs, and had wrecked those hopes by the stormy outbreak of the French Revolution, wrecked them once more, this time on the sordid shoals of the divorce court:\* and England reverted to a policy of competent but unimaginative repression.

Our attitude towards foreign countries showed an equal lack of imagination: if the weak have no friends, the rich and powerful have many jealous enemies, but, secure in our consciousness of our good and peaceful intentions, we forgot that other nations saw us in a less attractive light. The "godly admonitions" which, in the best Liberal tradition of the enlightened schoolmistress, we enjoyed addressing to a benighted Continent had less and less effect as it became clear that we did not intend to support them

\* Parnell's divorce, which shattered his Irish party, and led incidentally to the break-up of the Liberals, gave the Conservatives too good an excuse for dropping all thoughts of concession to Irish nationality. The fate of Ireland at that time depended on three very strong and very different personalities—those of Parnell, Gladstone and Salisbury, of whom the two former had no point of contact save in their care for that unhappy country, while the two latter agreed only in their general religious outlook: Salisbury, though a great foreign minister, unfortunately regarded Ireland as a purely domestic question.

by action. Under the guidance of Gladstone the Liberal party increasingly concerned itself with domestic affairs, and, though he was eager to rouse the country to its moral responsibilities in Bulgaria and in Armenia, he was not the man to lead an unwilling party to increase our military strength.

Nor was Disraeli, whose part in foreign affairs was on the whole more showy than successful, though he unquestionably raised our prestige in Europe. His greatest service was his attempt (derided by his opponents) to make the country realise the Imperial position: the coronation of the queen as Empress of India, though the flamboyance of the gesture no doubt had its attraction for him, was the act of a wise statesman.

It was not till the Diamond Jubilee of 1897 that the country became conscious of the greatness of its inheritance, and Joseph Chamberlain was the first statesman, as Kipling was the first poet, to declare its possibilities. The rude shock of the Boer War, as the century was ending, told us both that we had no army ready for service and no friend in Europe. We learnt the second lesson, but, in spite of Lord Roberts, persistently refused to learn the first.

### *Europe 1870-1900*

For the rest of the century Europe was endeavouring to adjust itself to the new situation which Germany's triumph had created: whatever dreams of a European community had survived from the days of Vienna were now finally dissipated, and the spirit of Bismarck became the spirit of the age. Treaties took the form of insurance policies, supplemented sometimes by reinsurance with some other firm.

Of this policy Bismarck, till his fall in 1890, was himself the protagonist. By the *entente* with Austria and Russia, made in 1872, the Dual Alliance with Austria made in 1879, the *Drei Kaiserbund* made in 1881 and renewed in 1884, and a secret Reinsurance Convention with Russia in 1887, he made Germany safe, and isolated France, which had recovered more quickly than he expected. He had three consistent antipathies: Liberalism, Catholicism and Polish nationality—the last as endangering relations with Russia. He had little fear of England, and was glad, by encouraging African ambitions, to sow dissension between her and France and Italy. The result was that Italy joined the Dual Alliance in 1882, and in its Triple form it was renewed in 1897. His object was to maintain an equipoise between Russia and



Austria, and, above all, to prevent any *rapprochement* between Russia and France. Had Bismarck remained in office, his object might have been secured, and he might have played upon England's traditional distrust of Russia to charm her out of her "splendid isolation": but William II had other views, and his jealousy of her naval supremacy combined with his dislike of his uncle, King Edward, to cause English overtures at the end of the century to be rejected, even though by 1894 the Russian *entente* with France had become a reality.

As was to be expected, it was in the Balkans that trouble arose. A few general observations will show how much explosive material they provided. That the Turkish rule was oppressive, corrupt and tyrannical no one denied, and as the victims were mainly orthodox Christians; the Tsar was their natural champion; but Austria, now with a Hungarian minister, was increasingly looking eastwards, and had no desire either to see Russia dominate the Balkans or to be herself barred from the Aegean Sea. England shared to the full her distrust of Russia, and was also influenced by a belief (which did more credit to her heart than to her head) that Turkey was capable of reforming herself: this belief was reinforced when, in 1876, by way of answer to the Pan-Slav agitation, the Young Turks (a term usually confined to their successors in 1908) deposed the Sultan and initiated what might be called a Pan-Islamic movement. Pathetically relying on their protestations of "the great principles of equality and justice" which their Government sought to introduce, we very nearly went to war with Russia, but Bismarck, who saw that in an Austro-Russian war he would be forced to take the Austrian side, laboured for peace, and in the end we went no further than a naval demonstration.

The course of the struggle can be briefly told. Servia and Montenegro declared war on Turkey in 1876: England was divided between her horror at the Bulgarian atrocities of the Turks and her fears of Russia, which declared war on Turkey in 1877, and was victorious after a desperate struggle. At the Congress of Berlin next year Bismarck, playing the part of "the honest broker", increased his country's prestige, pleased England by diminishing some Russian gains, Russia by maintaining others, and Austria by securing for her the right to "preserve order" in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The result was the definite emergence of Roumania, Servia and Montenegro as sovereign and independent states: Bulgaria, which the Congress had confined to the north of the

Balkans, successfully defied the powers in 1885, and united Eastern Roumelia to herself.

Disraeli, who boasted that he brought back "peace with honour" from Berlin, had really accomplished little. His policy was founded on two fundamental mistakes, the belief that Turkey could be trusted to carry out the reforms she promised, and the belief that new Balkan states would inevitably increase Russian power. His acquisition of Cyprus from Turkey, on the other hand, though bitterly criticised by his opponents, was as wise as his purchase of the Suez Canal shares from Ismail Pasha of Egypt, which they attacked with equal vigour.

The Settlement of Berlin by no means ended troubles in the Balkans: in 1885 Servia attacked Bulgaria, and Greece in 1897 challenged Turkey once more. This last war demonstrated Turkey's recovery of strength, and the Kaiser's sensational visit to the Sultan \* and the project of the Baghdad railway were significant departures from the Bismarckian policy.

Bismarck had never been greatly interested in expansion outside Europe: he was, as he said, "no colonial man", regarding colonies as a source of weakness, but he yielded to pressure, and in "the scramble for Africa" Germany received a reasonable share without any open quarrel with England. Human nature being what it is, it is somewhat to the general credit that the partition of Africa was so peacefully carried through. It was, indeed, by the end of the century becoming clear that other continents were to play a decisive part in European history.

England had acquired the control of Egypt, not without serious friction with the French, who had been compensated for our acquisition of Cyprus with a free hand in Tunisia: Italy was anxiously staking out her African claim. In Asia Japan had risen to the rank of a first-class Power: France was busily engaged in extorting territorial concessions from China in Annam and Tonking and threatening the independence of Siam. Imperialism had been popularised in England by Disraeli, and Chamberlain had at last awakened the country to an interest in its possessions overseas. The nineteenth century is the last which can be reasonably regarded, or treated, as European, and it was a century which in its later years was definitely and disastrously dominated by the Bismarckian influence.

\* It is said that he entered Jerusalem through a breach specially made in the wall, clad in shining armour and attended by Lutheran pastors in evening dress, precariously mounted on donkeys.

The Union of Germany, unlike that of Italy, would seem to have released, or concentrated, German powers, and given fresh scope to the undoubted virtues of the race, such as industry and patience in research of every kind, by no means solely utilitarian. In the later nineteenth century German influence was strongly felt in England in many different directions: German philosophy (first popularised by Carlyle) made a profound impression on our thinkers, and German views in history, scholarship and theology, which had already begun to attract attention in the century's middle years, found an increasingly wide acceptance—not always to our advantage.\* Like France in the days of Louis XIV, Germany was in the twentieth century to throw away an intellectual and economic domination which was almost within its grasp for what seemed the easier domination of "blood and iron". The Bismarckian lesson had been too well learnt, and the attempt was made to apply it on a scale which he, to do him justice, had never contemplated.

\* We only began to realise the defects of German "higher criticism" (which we had swallowed eagerly when applied to the Gospels) when it was applied to Shakespeare with grotesque results. Another source of trouble was (in the words of Sir Edward Grey) that while all the British professors were pacifists, all the German professors—in their hearts—were chauvinists (Oliver, *op. cit.*, III, 155)—a great change from the days of Schiller and Goethe.

#### NOTE ON BRITISH FOREIGN POLICY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Canning, whose brief ministry (1820) was a landmark in the history of parties—for most of the "Canningite Tories" passed into the ranks of the Whigs—vitally affected in two ways our attitude to foreign affairs. In the first place, he ("an unequalled Foreign Secretary" in Lord Acton's opinion) held firmly to a belief in nationality as a guiding principle, and in the right of small nations to control their internal affairs: this creed was inherited by Palmerston, with the addition that it was England's mission to encourage Liberal institutions in all countries. It has been said that "if Canning's root principle was 'non-interference' Palmerston's was almost 'pan-interference'"; and that "Gladstone was the prophet, Palmerston the bagman and Canning the statesman of Liberty" (Temperley, *Canning*, p. 276). Secondly, it was due to Canning's influence that foreign politics ceased to be a mystery to the public at large, so that general elections sometimes turned on foreign policy—often very imperfectly understood. For example, our attitude towards Russia was largely determined by our national ignorance of everything about her, except for a growing appreciation of her literature. We did not realise that a country so vast, so heterogeneous and so backward almost demands an autocratic government, and our healthy prejudice against autocrats (however well-intentioned) is only allayed if they can "usurp a" democrat's "all-atoning name".

## Conclusion

Hitherto we have been able, at some considerable sacrifice, to treat of European history as concerning that continent alone: that is no longer possible, and the attempt must be abandoned. The "armed peace" which had existed since 1870 had never been secure, as indeed no system of "power politics" can ever be, and had resulted in the formation of two great *blocs* of rival interests and ambitions, with England still clinging precariously to isolation. It was clear that this position could not be permanently maintained, and certain that we should revert to our traditional policy of opposing any power which threatened to dominate the Continent.

It was equally certain that, whenever this menace became acute, a war would break out which would involve the whole world. The war between Spain and the United States in 1898 had shown that Europe was isolated no longer, and the young Kaiser was beginning to dream of the Yellow Peril. The danger was manifest, and in 1898 the Tsar Nicholas II, with a curious reversion to the policy of 1815, invited Europe to face it. His approach was very different from that of his ancestor: the circular which his minister addressed to all the Powers proposed a general disarmament as the only means of avoiding a war, "the horrors of which make every thinking being shudder in anticipation". It pointed out that while the preservation of peace was universally recognised as the main object of international policy, this beneficial result had by no means been secured: "in proportion as the armaments of each Power increase, they less and less fulfil the objects which the Governments have set before themselves. It appears evident that, if this state of things continues, it will inevitably lead to the very cataclysm which it is desired to avert".

Twenty-six nations met at the Hague, the Conference including representatives from the United States, Mexico, China, Persia and Siam. It was clear that European history as such was ending and that it was time for world history to make a conscious beginning.\*

\* This truth has been publicly recognised, as this book is being written, by the public declaration of the British Minister of State that our frontier is the world of man (R. K. Law, March 13th, 1944).

We all know how the efforts thus inaugurated failed, and how two World Wars have falsified the hopes of those who trusted in human reason or enlightened self-interest. It would be easy to conclude that the failure was inevitable then, and must be continued through a *crescendo* of disaster, but to form such a conclusion would be to misread the teaching of history.

In spite of the manifold errors of the Treaty of Versailles and of the comparative impotence of the League of Nations, it is perfectly clear that they mark a real and definite advance on anything which European history had to show. The Treaty of Vienna—itsself an appreciable advance on previous treaties—had not been vindictive, but it had not been constructive; that of Versailles marked a real attempt to look at Europe as a whole and to reorganise it on a basis which, however faulty, was at least not irrational. The League of Nations, fatally weakened from the first by American refusal to co-operate, was a real acknowledgment, translated into practical shape, of the duty of nations to rise above mere self-interest, and to co-operate for the general good, a conception implicit in the great mediaeval theory of the Holy Roman Empire, but neither then nor since translated into practice. Unity had in the Middle Ages been a glorious dream: the Renaissance had taught men to despise dreams and to rely on reason. It was the irrefutable logic of hard facts which forced Europe to resume the attempt to make that dream come true.

History, properly interpreted, is the best cure for the pessimism which its particular incidents encourage—a pessimism which in the fine Elizabethan phrase, would “quail the hopes and blunt the edge of virtuous endeavours”. “A thousand years” (we are told) “are with the Lord as one day”, and it is not too much to hope that in the few hours, by divine reckoning, which have passed since 1918 the world has learnt more of the lessons which it so plainly teaches, and is ready to take more steps along the road which alone can lead to happiness and peace. “The brotherhood of mankind” is now an article of faith with many who reject the doctrine on which alone it securely rests, the Christian ideal is accepted by many who deny its creed, and what are called the Christian virtues are honoured by many who do not know them to be divine: it is perhaps not excessive optimism to believe that they will in time be able to echo the prayer which every Christian must utter, and which offers the only ultimate hope for the world’s peace, O God and Father of all, Whom the whole heavens adore,

may the whole earth also worship Thee, all Kingdoms obey Thee,  
all tongues confess and bless Thee, and the sons of men love Thee  
and serve Thee in peace.

For surely as mind in man groweth  
so with his manhood groweth his idea of God,  
wider ever and worthier, until it may contain  
and reconcile in reason all wisdom passion and love,  
and bring at last (may God so grant) Christ's Peace on Earth.  
*(The Testament of Beauty, Book I.)*

# SOME POPES AND HOLY ROMAN EMPERORS

440-461	Leo I	
590-604	Gregory I	
731-741	Gregory III	
795-816	Leo III	
800-814		Charlemagne
814-840		Lewis the Pious
962-973		Otto I (see Genealogical Table)
983-1002		Otto III
999-1000	Sylvester II	
1002-1024		Henry II
1039-1056		Henry III
1048-1054	Leo IX	
1056-1077		Henry IV
1073-1085	Gregory VII	
1088-1099	Urban II	
1099-1118	Paschal II	
1106-1125		Henry V
1152-1190		Frederic Barbarossa
1154-1159	Hadrian IV	
1159-1181	Alexander III	
1190-1197		Henry VI
1198-1216	Innocent III	
1212-1250		Frederic II
1227-1241	Gregory IX	
1243-1254	Innocent IV	
1273-1292		Rudolf I (of Hapsburg)
1294	Celestino V	
1294-1303	Boniface VIII	
1308-1314		Henry VII (of Luxemburg)
1314-1347		Lewis IV (of Bavaria)
1347-1378		Charles IV (of Luxemburg)
1410-1438		Sigismund (of Luxemburg)
1417-1431	Martin V	
1438-1440		Albert II (of Hapsburg)
1440-1493		Frederic III
1447-1455	Nicholas V	
1450-1464	Pius II	
1471-1484	Sixtus IV	
1484-1493	Innocent VIII	
1493-1503	Alexander VI	
1493-1519		Maximilian
1503-1513	Julius II	
1513-1522	Leo X	
1519-1558		Charles V
1523-1534	Clement VII	
1534-1550	Paul III	
1555-1559	Paul IV	
1558-1564		Ferdinand I
1566-1572	Pius V	
1619-1637		Ferdinand II
1742-1745		Charles VII (of Bavaria)
1765-1790		Joseph II
1790-1792		Leopold II
1792-1806		Francis II
1846-1878	Pius IX	

## THE EASTERN ROMAN EMPIRE

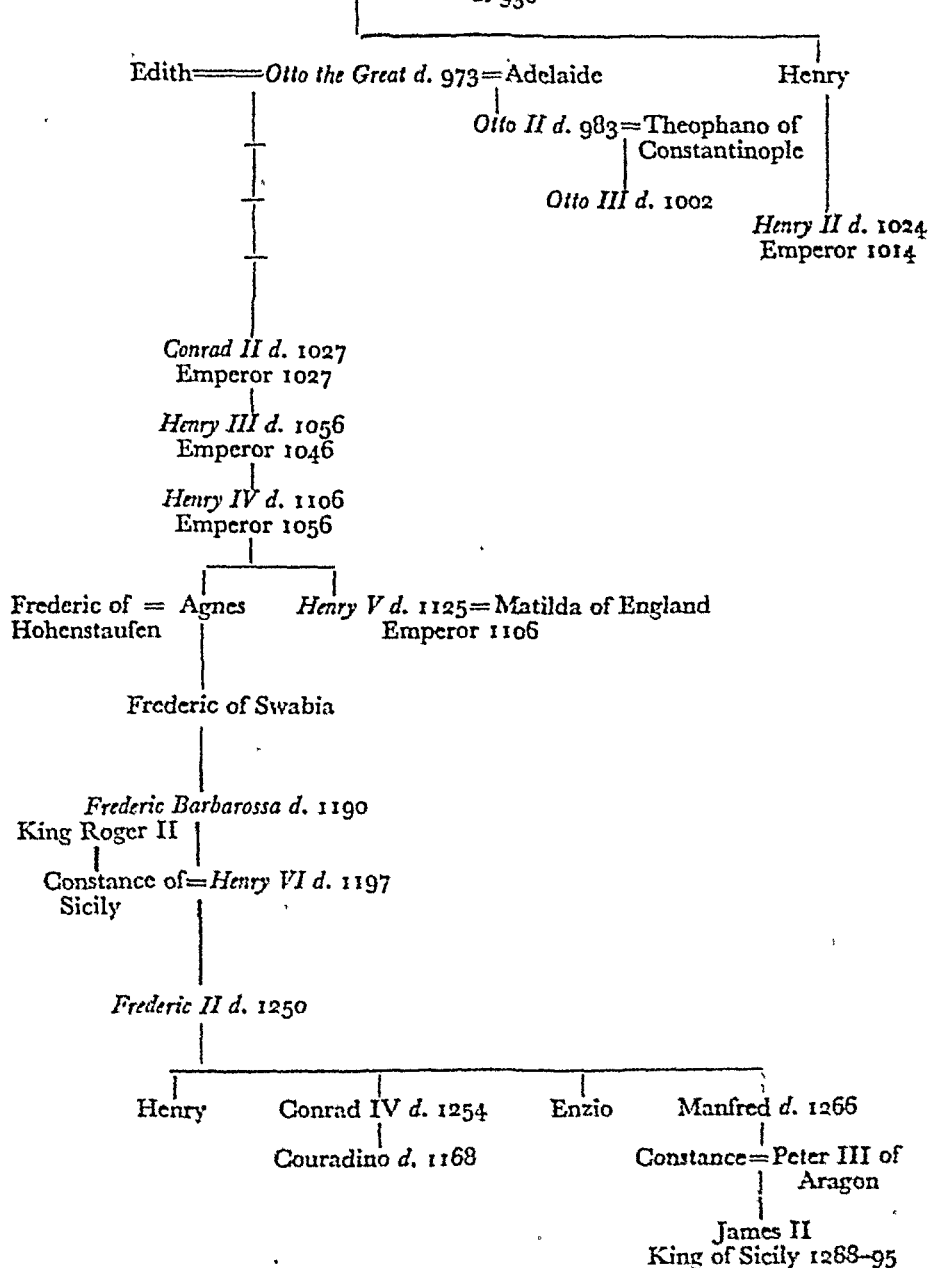
527-565	Justinian	
610-641	Heraclius	
717-740	Leo VII the Isaurian	
867-886	Basil I the Macedonian	} The Macedonian House
886-912	Leo VI	
912-953	Constantine VII	
953-1025	Basil II (Bulgaroctonus)	
963-969	(Nicephorus Phocas co-emperor	
969-976	John Tzimiskes co-emperor)	
1054	Final breach with Rome	
1067-1071	Romanus IV (defeated at Manzikert 1071)	
1081-1118	Alexius Comnenus	
1095	(The First Crusade)	
1118-1143	John Comnenus	
1143-1180	Manuel Comnenus (defeated at Myriokephalon 1176)	
1144	(The Second Crusade, after fall of Edessa)	
1185-1204	The Angeli	
1187	(The Third Crusade, after fall of Jerusalem)	
1204	The Fourth Crusade	
1204-1260	The Latin Empire of Constantinople	
1261-1282	Michael VIII Palaeologus	
1423-1448	John VIII Palaeologus (submits to Rome 1459)	
1448-1453	Constantine XI Palaeologus	

## THE KINGS OF FRANCE OF THE HOUSE OF CAPET

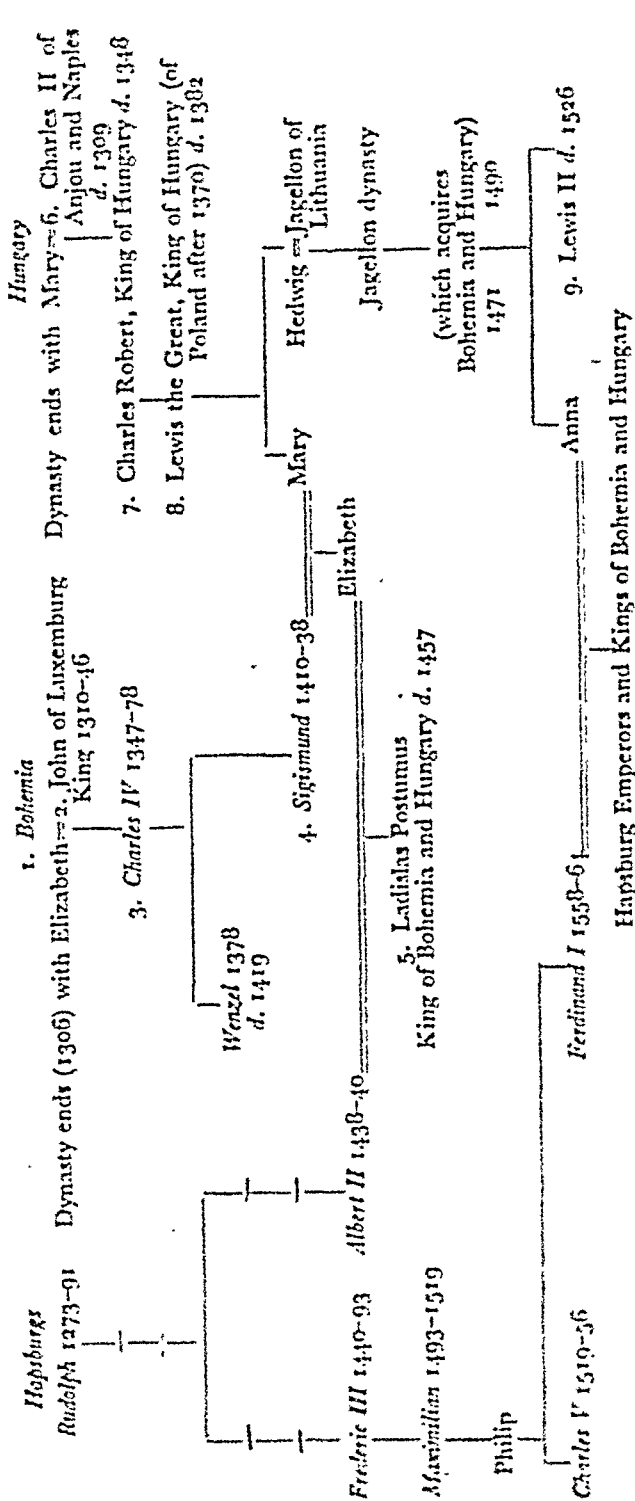
987-996	Hugh Capet
996-1180	5 direct descendants
1180-1223	Philip II Augustus
1223-1226	Louis VIII
1226-1270	Louis IX
1270-1285	Philip III
1285-1314	Philip IV
1314-1327	3 sons of Philip IV
1327-1462	5 descendants of Philip's brother, Charles of Valois
1462-1483	Louis XI
1483-1498	Charles VIII
1498-1515	Louis XII, his cousin, of the House of Valois Orleans
1515-1547	Francis I, his cousin, of the House of Valois Angoulême
1547-1559	Henry II
1559-1589	His three sons, Francis II, Charles IX, Henry III
1589-1610	Henry IV, of the House of Bourbon, descended from a son of Louis IX
1610-1643	Louis XIII
1643-1715	Louis XIV
1715-1774	Louis XV (his great-grandson)
1774-1793	Louis XVI
1793-1795	Louis XVII (died in prison)
1815-1824	Louis XVIII (brother of Louis XVI)
1824-1830	Charles X (ditto)
1830-1848	Louis Philippe (descended from the brother of Louis XIV)



DESCENDANTS OF HENRY THE FOWLER OF SAXONY (see p. 72)  
d. 936



## THE RELATIONS OF AUSTRIA, BOHEMIA, HUNGARY, POLAND AND LUXEMBURG



1. Bohemia a fief of Germany since 918; a kingdom since 1108. Ottokar II (1253-78) acquired the Duchy of Austria, soon retaken by Rudolf of Hapsburg. Confirmed as first lay Elector in 1156.
2. Bribed in campaign against heathen Wends: killed at Cicey: son of Emperor Henry VIII.
3. Did much for Bohemia, and especially for Prague, which he hoped to make the chief city of Germany.
4. As King of Hungary was defeated by the Turks at Nicopolis 1396.
5. At his death the Hunyadi dynasty was elected in Hungary and the Hapsburgs in Bohemia: when they died out both countries accepted Polish kings.

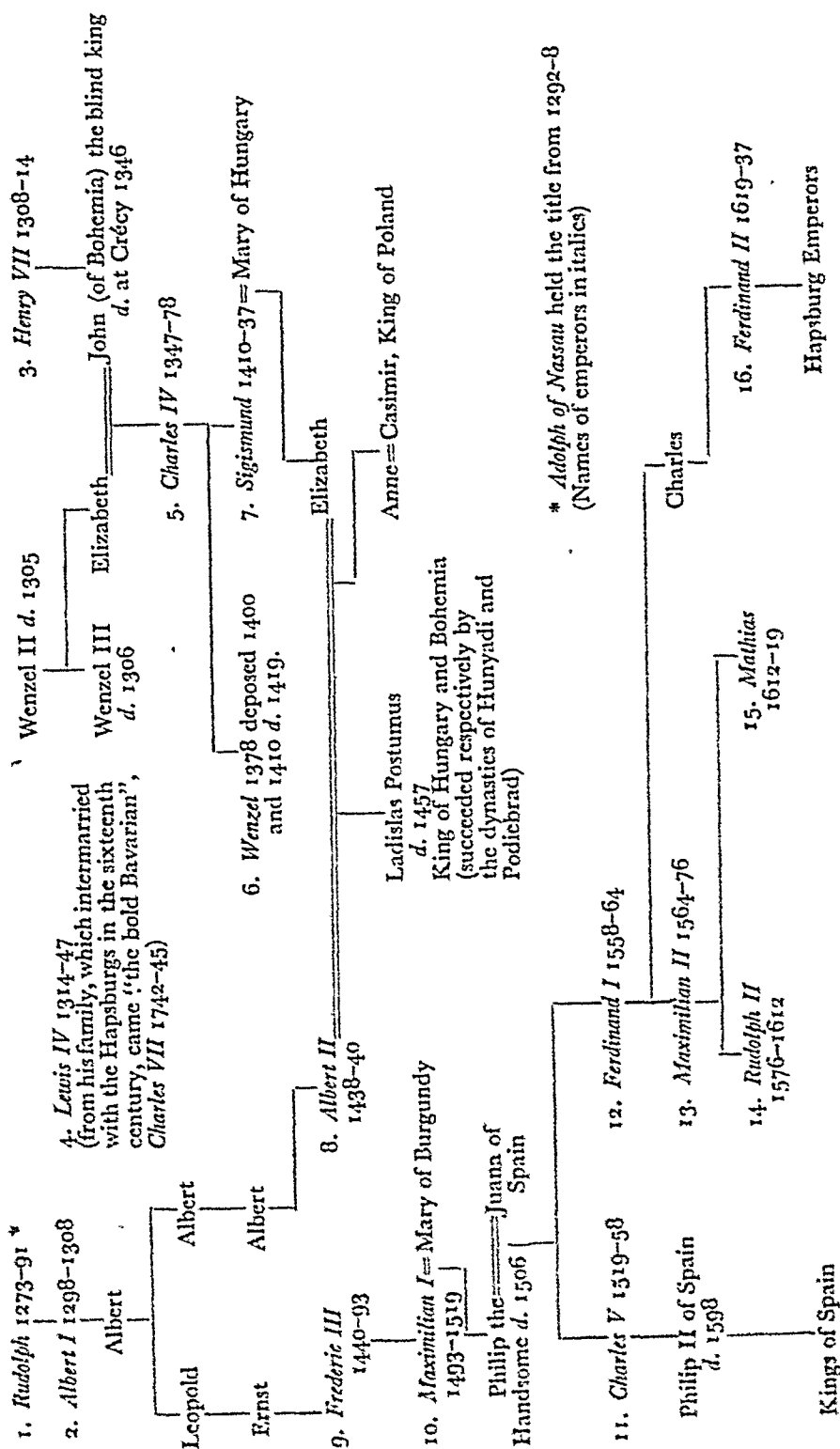
6. Son of Charles, King of Naples (and, till 1250, of Sicily), who was St. Louis's brother.
7. Introduced French culture into Hungary, and strengthened the royal power.
8. Annexed Galicia to Hungary: was more interested in Italy (where he claimed the Kingdom of Naples) than in Hungary, and surrendered royal power to the nobles.
9. Killed at Mohacs 1526, which really involved the end of the separate existence both of Hungary and of Bohemia.

## LUXEMBURG

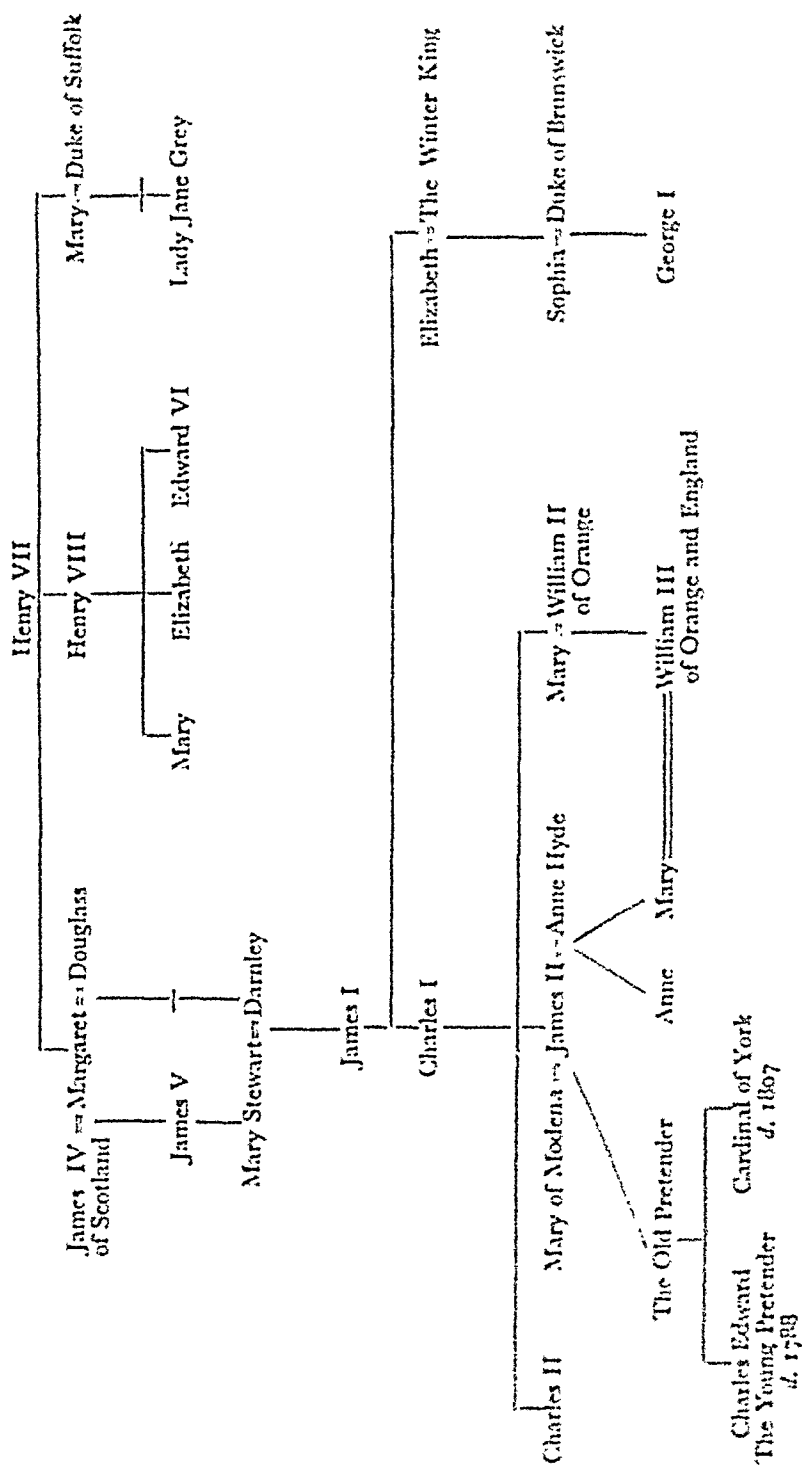
## BOHEMIA

## BAVARIA

## HAPSBURG

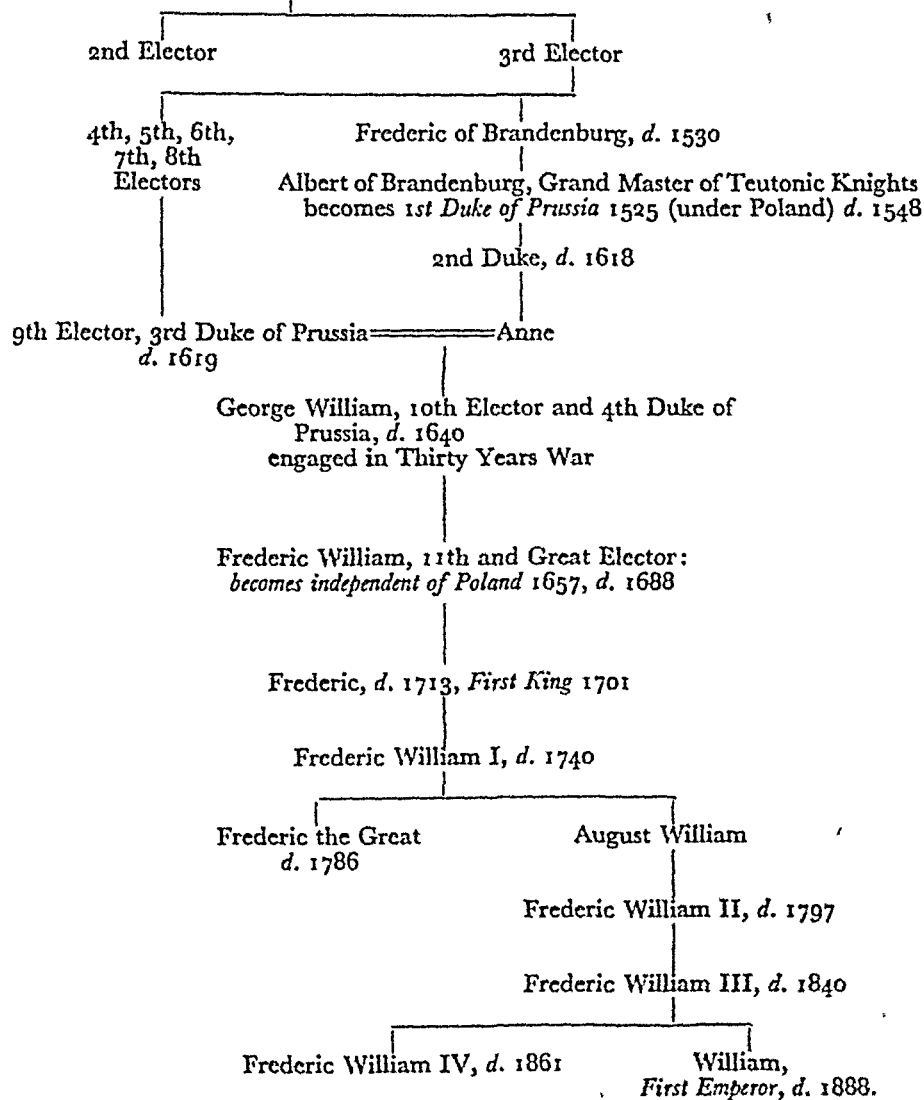


## THE SUCCESSION TO THE ENGLISH CROWN FROM HENRY VII TO GEORGE I



## THE HOHENZOLLERNS

John Frederic 1st *Elector of Brandenburg* 1415-40



## INDEX

*For the convenience of the reader, the names of Emperors and Popes and of the rulers of England, France, Spain, Russia, Sweden and Prussia have been grouped together and in chronological order: the names of battles and treaties are also given separately.*

### EMPERORS OF ROME

Augustus, 12	Diocletian, 20 f.	Theodosius, 23
Marcus Aurelius, 18	Constantine, 21 f.	

### EMPERORS OF CONSTANTINOPLE

Justinian, 32 ff.	Theophilus, 43 f.	Alexius Comnenus, 80 ff.
Maurice, 38, 46	Basil I, 64	John, 84
Phocas, 38	Leo VI, 65	Manuel, 84 f.
Heraclius, 38 f.	Constantine VII, 65	The Angel, 85
Justinian II, 40	Basil II, 66 f.	Michael Palaeologus, 112
Leo the Isaurian, 41 f.	Nicephorus Phocas, 66	John VIII, 163
Constantine V, 42	John Tzimisce, 66	Constantine XI, 164
Irene, 42	Theodora, 79	
Michael II, 43	Romanus IV, 80	

### HOLY ROMAN EMPERORS

Charlemagne, 54 ff.	Lewis IV, 151	Rudolph II, 215
Lewis the Pious, 57	Charles IV, 152, 174, 177	Ferdinand II, 175, 215,
Lothair, 58	Wenzel, 152, 174	229, 231 ff.
Henry the Fowler, 72	Sigismund, 153, 156, 175 f.	Charles VI, 285, 289
The Ottos, 72 f.	Albert II of Hapsburg, 153,	Charles VII (of Bavaria),
Henry II and III, 73	176	289
Henry IV, 95	Frederic III, 170, 175, 177	Francis I, 290
Frederic I, 85, 96 f.	Maximilian I, 175, 177 f.	Joseph II, 175, 300 f.
Frederic II, 97, 116 ff.	Charles V, 173, 188 ff.	Leopold II, 315
Rudolph of Hapsburg, 122	Ferdinand I, 178, 214	Francis II, 315, 342
Henry VII, 124	Maximilian II, 215	

### POPEs

Leo I, 28, 45	Alexander III, 85, 93, 96	Sixtus IV, 183
Gregory I, 38, 45 f.	Innocent III, 80, 93, 97,	Innocent VIII, 183
Gregory II and III, 47	114 ff., 126, 135	Alexander VI, 173, 183,
Stephen, 48	Gregory IX, 93, 117	185
Leo III, 49 f.	Innocent IV, 117 f., 122 f.	Julius II, 185, 205 n.
Sylvester II, 73 n.	Celestino V, 119	Leo X, 191, 194 f., 299
Leo IX, 70, 74, 91, 94	Boniface VIII, 93, 119 f.,	Clement VII, 194 f., 195
Gregory VII, 76, 94 f., 102	129, 193	Paul III, 190, 195, 219
Urban II, 81, 95	Martin V, 146, 182	Pius V, 219 f.
Paschal II, 92 n.	Nicholas V, 183	Urban VIII, 220
Hadrian IV, 93 n., 96	Pius II, 145, 162, 182 f.	Pius IX, 344 f.

## ENGLAND

Alfred, 74  
 Edgar, 75  
 Ethelred, 75  
 Canute, 75  
 Edward the Confessor, 75  
 William I, 100 ff.  
 William II, 102  
 Henry I, 102  
 Henry II, 103 ff.  
 Richard I, 105, 126  
 John, 106, 130 f.  
 Edward I, 132 f.

Edward II, 133  
 Edward III, 147  
 Richard II, 148, 150  
 Henry V, 147, 150  
 Henry VI, 166  
 Edward IV, 167  
 Richard III, 167  
 Henry VII, 167 ff.  
 Henry VIII, 203 ff.  
 Edward VI, 207 f.  
 Mary, 207 f.  
 Elizabeth, 222 ff.

James I, 241 ff.  
 Charles I, 244 ff.  
 Cromwell, 265 ff.  
 Charles II, 268 ff.  
 James II, 271 f.  
 William III, 273 ff., 303  
 Anne, 303  
 George I, 303  
 George II, 265 n., 287, 290,  
 292 n.  
 George III, 305 f.  
 Victoria, 362 ff.

## FRANCE

Odo, Count of Paris, 71  
 Hugh Capet, 71  
 Louis VII, 100  
 Philip Augustus, 126 f.  
 Louis IX, 127 f.  
 Philip III, 128  
 Philip IV, 128 f.  
 Charles VII, 147, 169  
 Louis XI, 169 f.  
 Charles VIII, 163, 171, 184 f.

Louis XII, 185  
 Francis I, 188 f., 200  
 Henry II, 191 f., 202, 216  
 Henry III, 217  
 Henry IV, 217 ff., 236 ff.  
 Louis XIII, 238, 245  
 Louis XIV, 259 ff., 270 f.,  
 281 ff., 294  
 Louis XV, 285, 288, 293  
 Louis XVI, 309 f., 313

Napoleon, 314, 317 n., 318,  
 321 ff., 329 f.  
 Louis XVIII, 334  
 Charles X, 335  
 Louis Philippe, 335, 341,  
 343  
 Louis Napoleon, 343, 345,  
 347 ff.

## SPAIN

Ferdinand and Isabella,  
 171 ff., 185  
 Philip II, 192, 210 ff., 218  
 Philip III, 214, 250

Philip IV, 250  
 Charles II, 276  
 Philip V, 281 ff.  
 Charles III, 326

Joseph Bonaparte, 326  
 Ferdinand, 335  
 Isabella, 336, 343 n.  
 Amadeus, 336 n.

## RUSSIA

Ivan the Terrible, 253  
 Michael (Romanoff), 253  
 Alexis, 253  
 Peter the Great, 256, 283 f.  
 Elizabeth, 292

Catherine II, 292, 299 ff.  
 Paul, 319 f.  
 Alexander I, 320, 325, 327,  
 332, 336, 338

Nicholas I, 339, 341 f., 345,  
 350  
 Alexander II, 358 f.  
 Nicholas II, 372

## SWEDEN

Gustavus Vasa, 251  
 (Sigismund, 251)  
 Charles IX, 251

Gustavus Adolphus, 229 f.,  
 234, 251  
 Christina, 251, 255  
 Charles X, 255, 266

Charles XI, 256  
 Charles XII, 255 f., 283 f.  
 Gustavus III, 301 n.  
 Bernadotte, 331 n.

## PRUSSIA

The Great Elector, 252,  
 255, 259, 261  
 Frederic (King), 281  
 Frederic William I, 287

Frederic the Great, 287,  
 289 ff., 316, 347  
 Frederic William III, 334,  
 339

Frederic William IV, 342,  
 346, 351 n.  
 William I, 354, 357  
 William II, 357, 369, 370,  
 372

## BATTLES

- Actium, 12  
 Agincourt, 151  
 Alexandria, 320  
 Angora, 156  
 Austerlitz, 325  
 Bannockburn, 133  
 Beachy Head, 274  
 Blenheim, 282  
 Breitenfeld, 231  
 Camperdown, 319  
 Cannae, 8  
 Cape Passaro, 285  
 Chaeronea, 6  
 Chalons, 26  
 Copenhagen, 320  
 Crécy, 150  
 Custozza, 344  
 The Dunes, 265, 267  
 Fehrbellin, 255  
 Fontenoy, 290  
 Hieromax, 39  
 Hohenlinden, 320  
 Ivry, 218  
 Jena, 325  
 Kephissos, 113  
 Kosovo, 156, 160  
 Kunersdorf, 295  
 La Hogue, 275  
 Lepanto, 200, 213  
 Leipzig, 328  
 Lewes, 131  
 Lowestoft, 264  
 Lützen, 233  
 Magenta, 352  
 Malplaquet, 282  
 Manzikert, 80  
 Marathon, 3  
 Marengo, 320  
 Marignano, 190  
 Minden, 296  
 Mohacz, 157, 178, 209  
 (258)  
 Möllwitz, 290  
 Morgarten, 154  
 Mühlberg, 197  
 Myriokephalon, 85  
 Naseby, 245  
 Navarino, 339  
 Nicopolis, 156  
 The Nile, 319  
 Pavia, 191  
 Pharsalia, 11  
 Philippi, 12  
 Plattsburgh, 4  
 Poitiers, 150  
 Poltava, 283  
 Quiberon Bay, 295  
 Rivoli, 318  
 Rocroi, 240  
 Sadowa, 356  
 The Saints, 299  
 St. Gothard, 257  
 St. Quentin, 192, 267  
 St. Vincent, 318  
 Salamis, 4  
 Sedan, 357  
 Sempach, 155  
 Tours, 52  
 Trafalgar, 324 f.  
 Valmy, 317  
 Varna, 164  
 Wagram, 327  
 Warsaw, 255  
 Waterloo, 328  
 Zama, 2

## TREATIES

- Adrianople, 339  
 Aix la Chapelle, 290  
 Amiens, 320  
 Berlin, 369  
 Breda, 264  
 Bretigny, 143  
 Cambrai, 191  
 Campo Formio, 318  
 Carlowitz, 258  
 Cateau Cambresis, 192, 218  
 Dover, 270  
 Luneville, 320  
 Nymwegen, 261  
 Nystadt, 284  
 Oliva, 255  
 Paris, 296  
 Prague, 231, 235  
 Pressburg, 325  
 The Pyrenees, 240, 250  
 Ryswick, 262  
 Tilsit, 325  
 Troyes, 143, 147  
 Utrecht, 282  
 Versailles, 373  
 Vervins, 213  
 Vienna, 331  
 Westminster, 270  
 Westphalia, 213, 235



## GENERAL

- Addington (Sidmouth), 320, 361  
 Aidan, St, 60  
 Alaric, 23  
 Alberoni, Cardinal, 286  
 Albigenes, 68, 125 n., 126, 135  
 Alcuin, 55, 60  
 Alexander, 6  
 Alfonso I of Aragon, 106  
 Alfonso VI of Castile, 106  
 Alfonso of Naples, 182  
 Alsace, 230, 358  
 Amarath, 156  
 Anglo-Saxons, 59  
 Anne of Austria, 238, 241  
 Anselm, St., 102  
 Anthony, St., 30  
 Arians, 27, 29 n.  
 Armada, The, 225  
 Arnold of Brescia, 92, 96  
 Attila, 26, 28 n.  
 Augsburg, Peace of, 197, 230  
 Augustine, St. (of Hippo), 23, 26  
 Avars, 32, 38 f.  
 Avignon, Papacy at, 120, 129, 143, 146  
 Augustus the Strong, 259, 288
- Bajazet, 156  
 Bartholomew, St., Massacre of, 211, 216  
 Basel, Council of, 176, 183  
 Bavaria, 54, 59, 123, 151, 229 ff., 280, 289  
 Becket, Archbishop, 98, 104  
 Bede, 61  
 Belgians, 315, 341  
 Belisarius, 28, 33 f.  
 Benedict, St., 30  
 Berlin Decree, 325  
 Bernard, St., 31, 99, 107 f., 135  
 Bible, The English, 149, 204  
 Bismarck, 297, 353 ff., 368 ff.  
 Black Death, The, 148, 153  
 Boccaccio, 144, 153  
 Bogomil, 68, 134  
 Bohemia, 123, 152, 231, 345  
 Bohemund, 81 f.  
 Bolingbroke, 282, 303 f.  
 Boniface, St., 53  
 Boris of Bulgaria, 67, 69  
 Brynhilda, 46 n., 52  
 Bulgarians, 40, 43, 67 ff., 159, 369 f.  
 Burke, 312 f.  
 Bute, 296  
 Byzantine character, 78 f.
- Canossa, 95  
 Capet, House of, 63, 71, 99  
 Carnot, 317  
 Carthage, 8  
 Castlereagh, 260, 327, 332, 334, 337  
 Cassiodorus, 27  
 Catherine dei Medici, 215 ff.  
 Cavalier Parliament, 272  
 Cavour, 347 n., 350 ff., 354  
 Chalcedon, Council of, 32  
 Chamberlain, Joseph, 368, 370  
 Charles Albert, 343 f.  
 Charles of Anjou, 118 ff.  
 Charles the Bold, 163, 169 ff.  
 Charles Martel, 47, 52  
 Chaucer, 138, 149  
 Chivalry, 214  
 Choiseul, 295 n.  
 Christian IV of Denmark, 230, 232  
 Churchill, Winston, 321 n.  
 Cicero, 10  
 Cistercians, 30, 108  
 Clive, 295  
 Clovis, 27, 51  
 Cluny, 30, 63, 94, 99, 107  
 Coke of Norfolk, 307  
 Colbert, 260  
 Coldstream Guards, 265  
 Coligny, 216 f.  
 Colleon, 180  
 Columbus, 163, 166, 173  
 Condé, 216, 240  
 Conrad, 118  
 Conservatives, 363 n., 366  
 Constance, Council of, 146, 153, 175-  
 Copernicus, 159  
 Cosimo dei Medici, 181  
 Cossacks, 159, 257, 283  
 Councils, General, 146 f., 182 f.  
 Cranmer, 207  
 Crete, 43, 256  
 Crimean War, 351  
 Crusade, the First, 81, 99  
 —, the Second, 99, 107  
 —, the Third, 85  
 —, the Fourth, 77, 86 ff.  
 Crusades, Effect of, 106  
 Cyprus, 85, 209, 370
- Dandolo, 86  
 Danes, 56, 61, 74 f., 230, 255, 356  
 Dante (quoted), 35, 49, 109, 112, 119 n.,  
 124, 128, 135, 138  
 Danzig, 124, 252  
 Decius, 19 f.  
 Design, The Great, 237  
 Diaz, Bartholomew, 166  
 Diocletian, 20 f.  
 Disraeli, 362, 366 ff., 370
- Cabot, 173  
 Caesar, 10  
 Calvin, 201 f.  
 Canning, 334 n., 336, 339, 371  
 Cannon, use of, 145 n.

- Dominic, St., 115, 135  
 Dundas, 321  
 Dunkirk, 267  
 Duplex, 290, 295  
 Dutch, The, 213, 261, 276, 341  
  
 Egypt, 365  
 Elliot, Sir John, 247, 249  
 Elizabeth Farnese, 286  
 Enclosure Acts, 363  
 Encyclopaedists, 300  
 Erasmus, 137, 206  
 Eugene, Prince, 282  
  
 Ferdinand of Naples, 334, 337  
 Fleury, Cardinal, 285 f., 288  
 Florence, 181 f.  
 Florence, Council of, 163  
 Fox, C. J., 305, 306 n., 313, 323  
 Francis of Assisi, St., 92, 112, 115, 133 f.  
 Francis Joseph, Emperor, 175, 346  
 Frederic, Elector Palatine, 232  
 French character, 126, 347 ff.  
 Friars, The, 115, 133  
 Froissart, 147  
 Fronde, The, 228, 241  
  
 Galileo, 228  
 Gambetta, 358, 365  
 Gardiner, Bishop, 206  
 Garibaldi, 345, 353  
 Gerbert (Pope Sylvester), 73  
 Germaine, Lord George, 296, 298  
 Gibraltar, 52, 282, 286  
 Gladstone, 362 ff., 366 f., 371 n.  
 Godfrey de Bouillon, 82, 83 n.  
 Golden Bull, The, 152, 174  
 Golden Horde, The, 158  
 Gonsalvo da Cordova, 145 n., 185  
 Grand Company, The, 112 f.  
 Greece, 2, 112 ff., 337 ff.  
 Grossetête, Bishop, 121 f., 134 n., 156  
 Grotius, 137, 276  
 Guiscard, Robert, 80, 88, 91, 95  
 Guise family, 216  
 Gutenberg, 163  
  
 Halifax, Lord (quoted), 115, 261, 269, 291, 304, 330, 353  
 Hampton Court Conference, 242  
 Hanseatic League, 153  
 Hapsburgs, The, 123, 174 f., 178  
 Harley, 304  
 Harold, 75  
 Hawkwood, Sir John, 151 n.  
 Henry the Navigator, 166  
 Hohenzollern, House of, 153 n., 178 n., 252  
  
 Hooper, Bishop, 207  
 Huguenots, 202 n., 216, 239, 262  
 Hungary, 157, 263 f., 215, 257 f., 312, 345 f.  
 Huss, The, 26  
 Hunyadi, John, 176  
 Hurst, John, 146, 175 f.  
  
 Iconoclasm, 41 ff.  
 Indulgences, 193  
 Inquisition, The, 173, 219  
 Interim, The, 197  
 Investitures, 91, 102  
 Ireland, 225, 245, 265, 307, 318 f., 367  
  
 Jagellon, House of, 159  
 Janissaries, 155 f., 339  
 Jansenism, 263  
 Jesuits, 220 f., 263 n.  
 Joan of Arc, 166  
 John I and II of Portugal, 166  
 John of Portugal and Brazil, 336  
 John, Don, 209, 212, 214  
 Joseph, Père, 233, 240  
  
 Kaunitz, 292  
 Kiuprillis, The, 256 ff.  
 Kosciuszko, 302  
 Kossuth, 342, 345  
  
 Lacedaemon, 112 f.  
 Lanfranc, 102  
 Langton, Archbishop, 131  
 Lateran Council, 115  
 Latimer, Bishop, 207  
 Laud, Archbishop, 243 n., 245 f.  
 Law, John, 286 n.  
 Leopold of Belgians, 339, 341  
 Lewis the Great, 157  
 Liberals, 363 n., 366  
 Locke, 273  
 Lollards, 149, 205  
 Lombards, 28, 36, 45, 47 f., 53, 55  
 Lorenzo the Magnificent, 145 n., 164 n., 181  
 Lorraine, 59, 285, 288, 358  
 Loyola, Ignatius, 220  
 Ludovico il Moro, 180, 182, 185  
 Luther, 193 ff.  
 Luxemburg, House of, 151  
  
 Macchiavelli, 145 n.  
 Magna Carta, 131  
 Maeyart, 72, 157, 315  
 Mahomet, 39 f.  
 Mahomet the Conqueror, 156, 164  
 Maintenon, Madame de, 262

- Malta, 267, 323  
 Manfred, 118  
 Maria Theresa, 175, 285, 289 ff., 300 f.  
 Marie dei Medici, 238  
 Marlborough, 282, 304, 328 n.  
 Mary Queen of Scots, 216, 224  
 Matthias Corvinus, 157, 176  
 Maurice of Saxony, 196 f.  
*Mayflower, The*, 244, 246 n.  
 Maximilian of Bavaria, 229, 231  
 Mazarin, 240, 260, 277  
 Meaux, Reformers of, 200  
 Medway, Dutch in, 175 n., 264  
 Merovingians, 53  
 Metternich, 332 ff.  
 Michael Cerularius, 70  
 Minorca, 282 f., 286, 294, 297 f.  
 Monroe doctrine, 354 n.  
 Montenegro, 161, 369  
 Montfort, Simon de, 131 f., 136  
 Moors in Spain, 76, 210  
 More, Sir Thomas, 206  
  
 Nantes, Edict of, 218, 262  
 Naples, 182, 185 f., 334 f.  
 Navy, Royal, 207, 265, 324 n.  
 Nelson, 319 f., 323 f.  
 Netherlands, *The*, 210 f., 302  
 Newcastle, Duke of, 293, 304, 305 n.  
 Normans, *The*, 71, 77, 85, 88 f., 91  
 North, Lord, 298 f., 305  
  
 Odo of Paris, 71  
 Olivarez, 250  
 Orange, 211 n.  
 Orleans, the Regent, 285  
 Ostrogoths, 27, 33  
  
 Palmerston, 356, 362, 364, 371 n.  
 Parker, Archbishop, 226  
 Parliament, *The Model*, 132  
 Parma, Duke of, 212, 225  
 Party government, 303 ff.  
 Paulinus of Nola, 25  
 Peel, Sir Robert, 361 f.  
 Pelham, 304, 305 n., 308 n.  
 Pepin, Mayor of Palace, 52  
 Pepys, 175 n., 272 n.  
 Persian Wars, 2 ff., 32, 34, 39  
 Peter of Aragon, 119  
 Petrarch, 179 f.  
 Pico della Mirandola, 144  
 Pitt (Chatham), 293 ff., 305  
 Pitt, William, 306, 312, 320 f.  
 Poland, 158, 229, 251 f., 258, 301 f., 341, 359  
 Pompadour, Madame de, 292 n., 293  
 Portugal, 106, 166, 213, 250, 269, 336  
 Pragmatic Sanction, *The*, 285, 289  
  
 "Prime Minister," 287, 304  
 "Protestants," 196  
 Prussia, 279, 283, 315, 318, 325 f., 342, 346  
 Puritans, 207, 242  
 Pym, 248  
  
 Quebec, 236, 295  
 Quixote, Don, 145, 214  
  
 Raglan, Lord, 351 n.  
 Raleigh, 244  
 Reform Bill, *The*, 313 n., 360, 362  
 Richard of Cornwall, 122, 130  
 Richelieu, 229, 233, 338 ff.  
 Rienzi, 179  
 Robespierre, 311, 314  
 Rockingham, 298  
 Rodney, 298  
 Roger, Count, 89  
 Roger, King, 89 ff.  
 Rollo of Normandy, 71, 88  
 Romanoff, House of, 253, 256  
 Roumania, 18, 351, 369  
 Royal Society, *The*, 243  
 Rurik, 66, 158  
  
 Sancho of Navarre, 76  
 Sardinia, 282, 286, 288 n.  
 Savonarola, 146, 182, 186  
 Savoy, 219, 286, 290, 315, 317, 352  
 Saxons, 55  
 Schism, *The Great*, 146, 152  
 Schleswig Holstein, 356  
 Schmalkalde, League of, 196  
 Schwartzenberg, 345 f.  
 Scotland, 133, 306 f.  
 Serbia, 160, 369  
 Settlement, Act of, 274  
 Sforza, Francesco, 180  
 Shaftesbury, Lord, 360, 363  
 Sicilian Vespers, 119  
 Sicily, 1, 8, 33, 89 f., 117 ff., 185, 283, 288 n., 337, 353  
 Sobieski, John, 257 ff.  
 Solymán the Magnificent, 208  
 Spires, Diet of, 195  
 Stanislas of Poland, 283, 286, 288  
 Star Chamber, *The*, 168  
 States-General, *The*, 129, 132, 236, 311 f.  
 Stephen Dushan, 155, 160  
 Strafford, 245 f.  
 Sully, 236  
 Switzerland, 123 n., 154, 170  
  
 Tangier, 269  
 Templars, *The*, 109, 129  
 Teutonic Knights, 109, 123, 159, 252  
 Theodora, Empress, 43

- Theodoric, 27, 43  
 Thiers, 322, 358  
 Thomas Aquinas, 135  
 Townshend, 298  
 Timour, 143, 155 f., 156 n.  
 Trent, Council of, 139, 197, 219 f.  
 Turks, 68, 79, 85, 164 ff., 256 ff., 302, 358, 359 f., 369  
 Tyndale, 204 n.  
  
 Ukraine, The, 257  
 Uniformity, Act of, 272 n.  
 Universities, 136  
  
 Vandals, 26, 33  
 Vasa, House of, 251  
 Vasco da Gama, 163, 166  
 Velasquez, 250  
 Venice, 26 n., 83, 86 f., 180, 184, 186, 318, 335 f.  
 Victor Amadeus, 280, 286  
 Victor Emmanuel, 344, 353  
 Virginia, 244  
 Visconti, The, 180  
 Visigoths, 27, 34, 51 f.  
  
 Waldenses, 200  
 Wales, 132, 207  
 Wallenstein, 230 ff.  
 Walpole, 285, 287, 304, 305 n.  
 Washington, George, 279, 297  
 Wellington, 13, 42, 324, 327 ff., 362  
 Wesley, John, 307  
 Whitby, Council of, 61  
 Witt, John de, 264  
 Wittelsbach, House of, 123, 151, 176 n., 280, 302, 357  
 Wolsey, 204  
 Worms, Concordat of, 95  
 Worms, Diet of, 194  
 Wycliffe, 146, 149  
  
 Xerxes, 3 f.  
 Ximenes, Cardinal, 172  
  
 York, Dukes of, 272, 324  
  
 Ziska, 176  
 Zollverein, 340

# EUROPE BEFORE HISTORY

AREAS COVERED BY GLACIERS  
IN THE  
ICE-AGE  
.....

## CLIMATIC REGIONS

### WESTERN EUROPE

MILD WINTERS

COOL SUMMERS

RAINY, CHIEFLY AUTUMN & WINTER

### CENTRAL EUROPE

COLD WINTERS

WARM SUMMERS

RAIN & THUNDERSTORMS IN SUMMER

### EASTERN EUROPE

DRY COLD WINTERS (INTENSE)

HOT SUMMERS

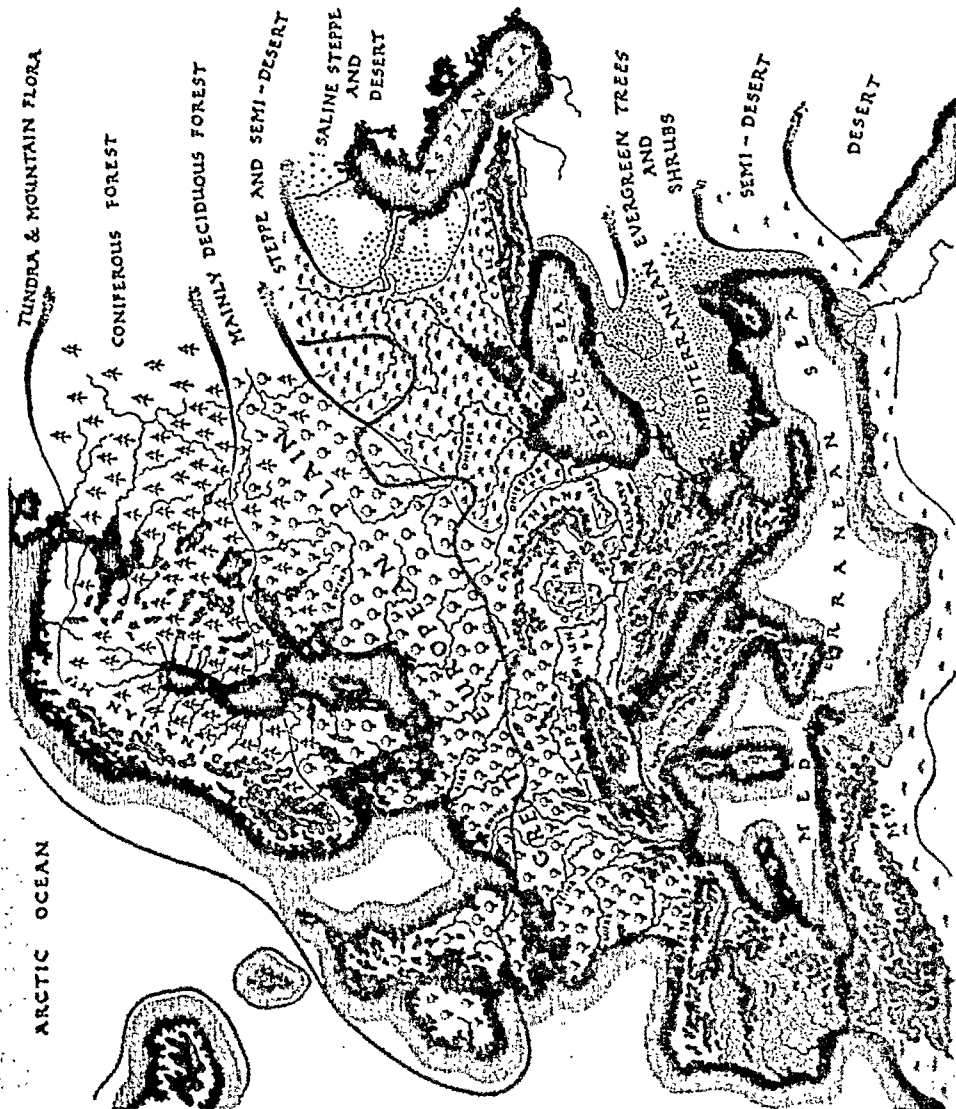
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MILD RAINY WINTERS

DRY WARM SUMMERS

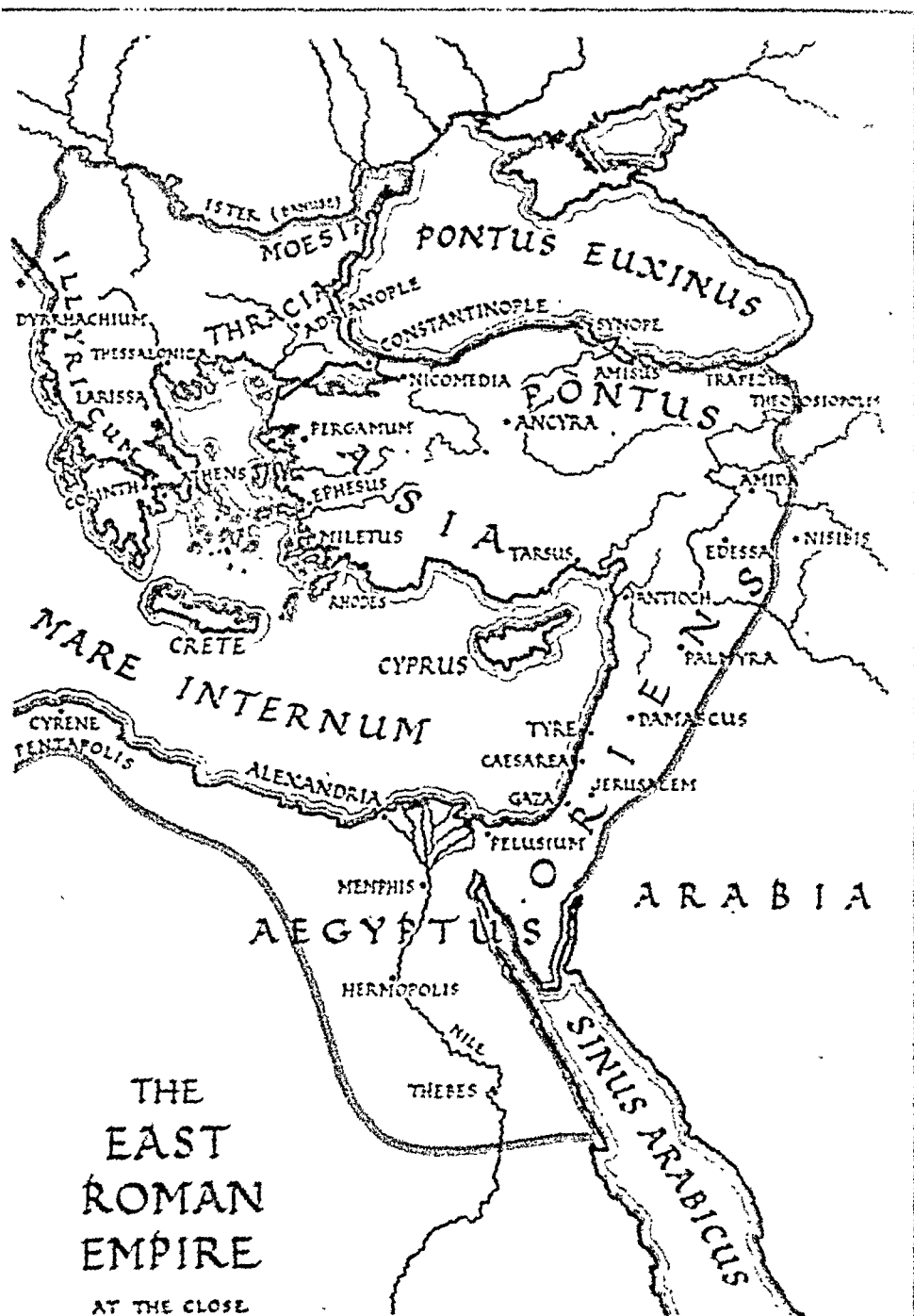
### TUNDRA (ARCTIC)

LONG SEVERE WINTER (VERY LITTLE DAYLIGHT)  
SHORT SUMMER (ALMOST CONTINUOUS DAYLIGHT)





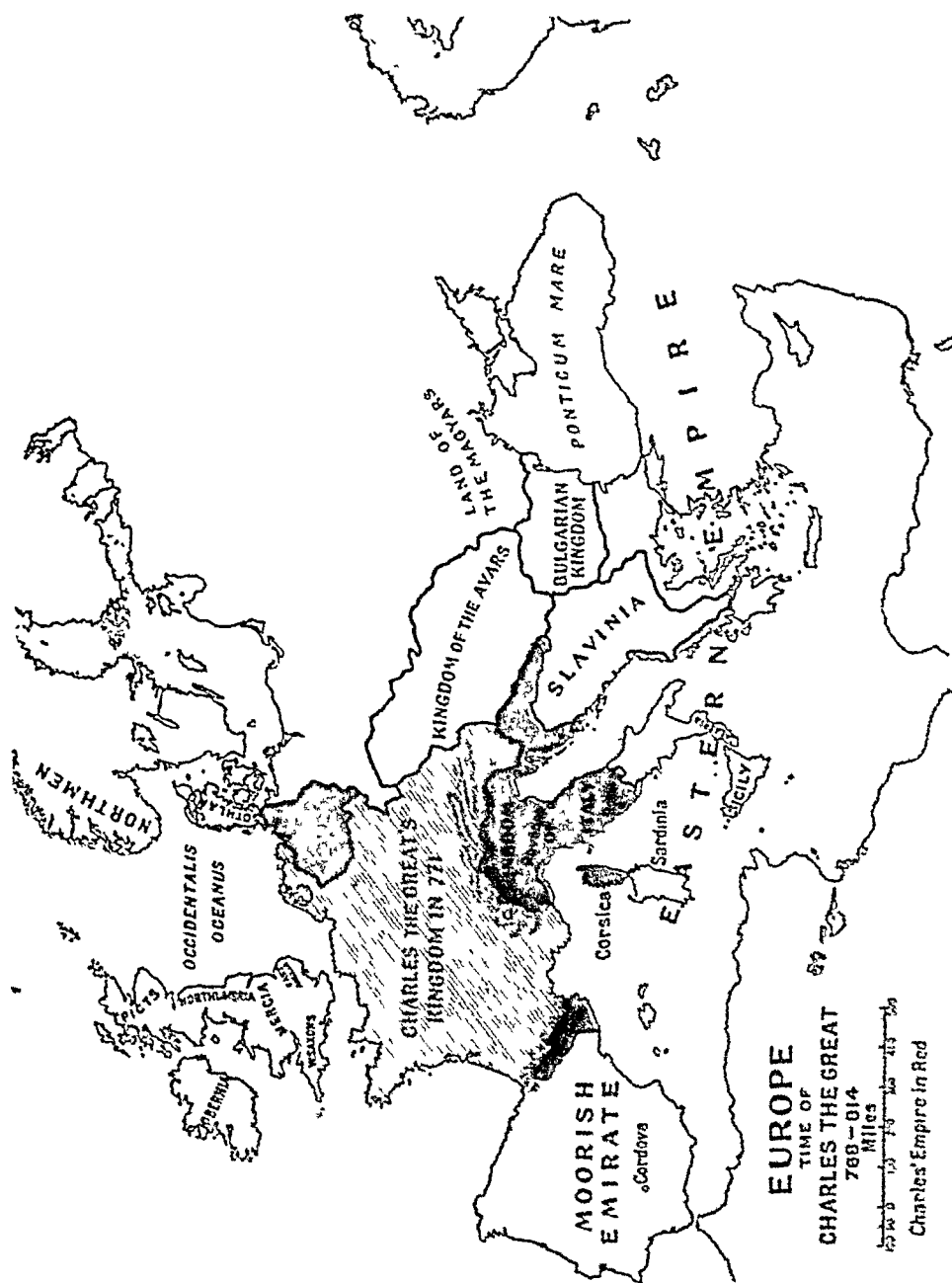




# THE EAST ROMAN EMPIRE

AT THE CLOSE  
OF THE  
5TH CENTURY





## EUROPE

TIME OF

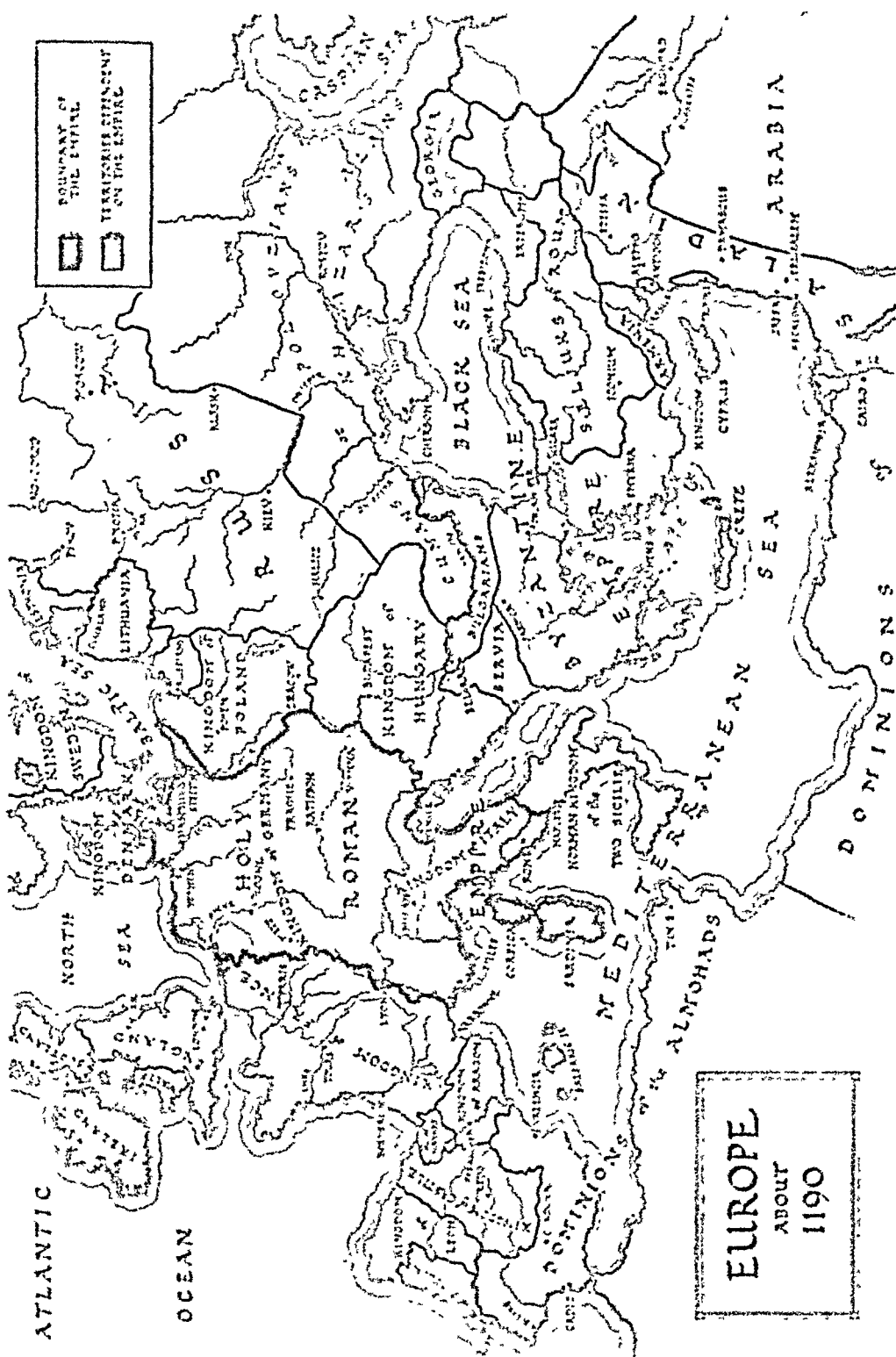
CHARLES THE GREAT

788-814

Miles




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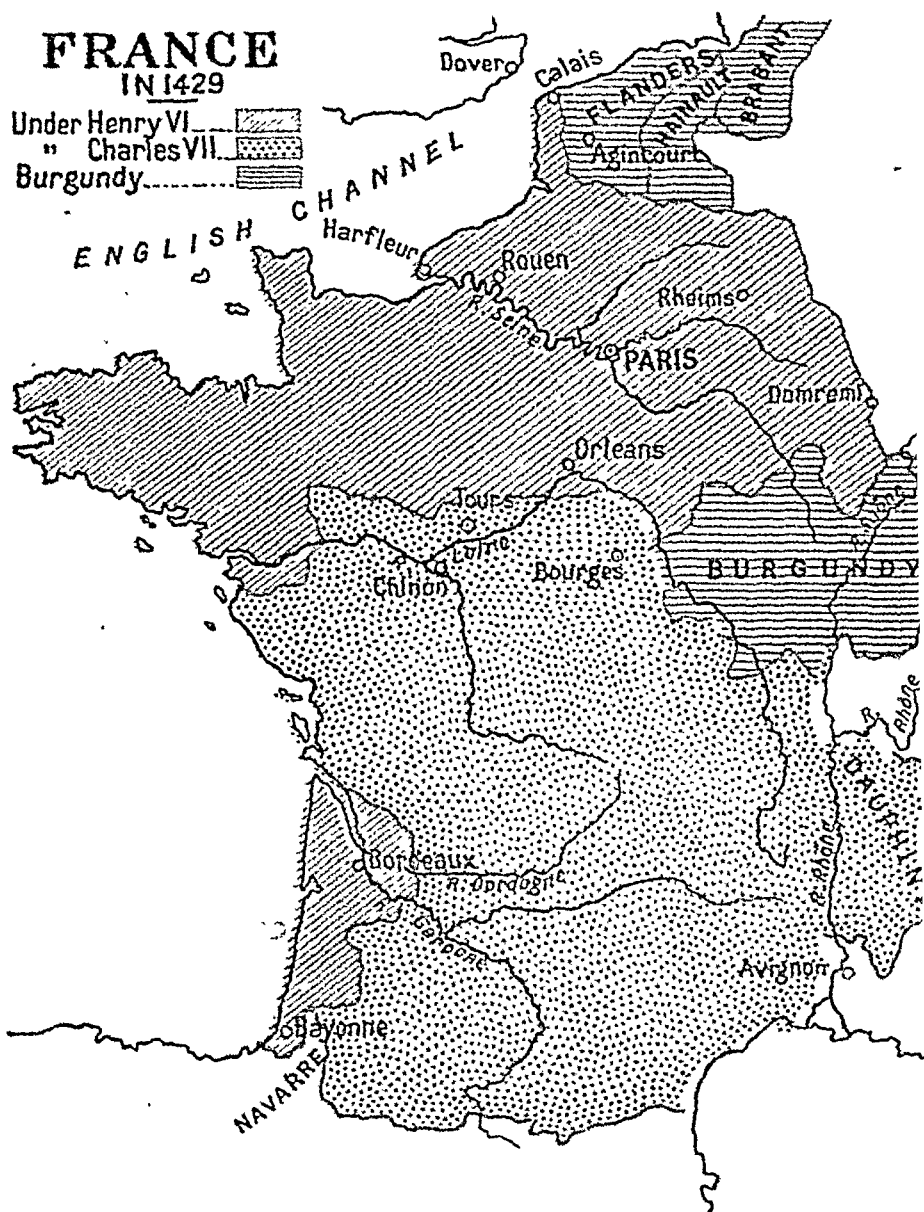
Charles' Empire in Red



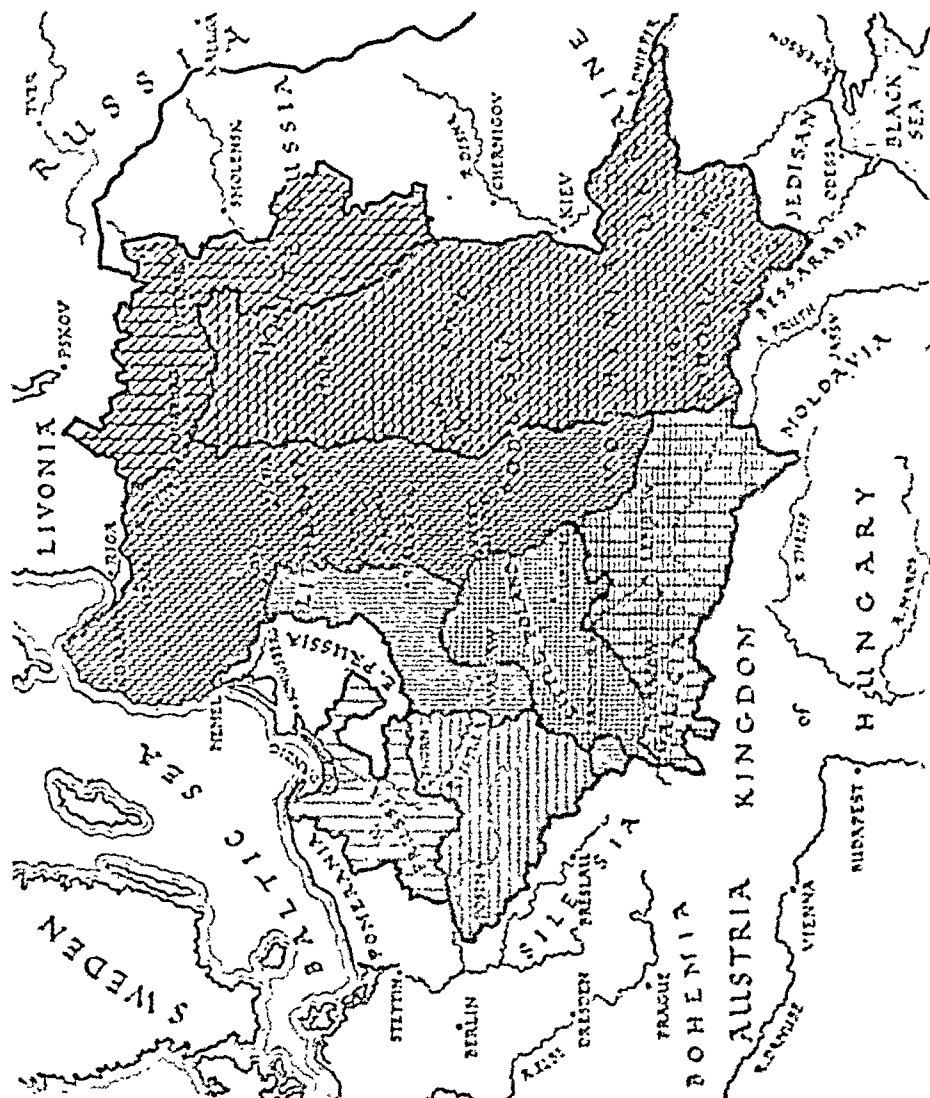
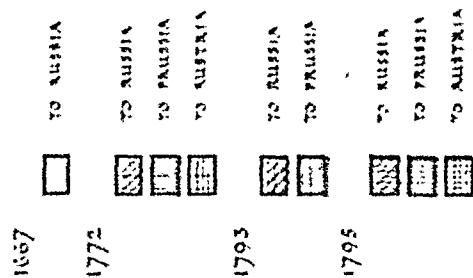
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# FRANCE IN 1429

Under Henry VI.   
 " Charles VII.   
 Burgundy. 



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